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DIVINE TRUST

By King James I of Scotland (1394-1437)

(*Rephrased by John Heard*)

Since but through virtue groweth dignitie,
And virtue is the flower and root of nobles aye,
Of any wit or what estate thou be
In His steps follow and dread no affray.
Eject all vice and follow Truth alway;
Love most thy God that first thy love began,
And for each inch, He'll 'quite thee with a span.

Be not o'er proud in thy prosperitie,
For as it comes, so will it pass away;
The time to count is short, thou may'st well see,
For of green grass soon cometh withered hay.
Labor in Truth which part is of thy fay;
Trust most in God, for he best guide thee can,
And for each inch, He'll 'quite thee with a span.

Since words are thralls and only thoughts are free,
Daunt thou thy tongue, that power has and sway,
And shut thine eyes from worldly vanitie;
Restrain thy lust and hark to what I say:
Grasp lest thou slide; stay on the broad highway;
Lay thou firm hold upon thy God and man,
And for each inch, He'll 'quite thee with a span.

THE REDENTIN EASTER PLAY

Translated and condensed from the Low German of the fifteenth century

By A. E. ZUCKER (*University of Maryland*), H. K. RUSSELL and MARY MARGARET RUSSELL (*University of North Carolina*)

The type of dramatic presentation exemplified in the *Redentin Easter Play* is familiar to readers of English literature from the mystery plays staged by the clergy at Easter and later by the members of various guilds at the Corpus Christi festival in Coventry, Chester, and other towns from about the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries. The hearty craftsmen had the custom of presenting scenes from Holy Writ or saintly lore in a pious spirit from which, however, jovial humor was by no means absent. This play was written (and in all probability also played) in Redentin in northern Germany on the coast of the Baltic near Wismar in 1464. The author, a man of considerable dramatic skill endowed with robust popular wit, is not known; some histories of literature assign the work to Peter Kalff, whose name appears in the records of the period as an official in the monastery at Redentin, but this is mere conjecture. The critics are pretty well agreed that it is the best of all German Easter plays.

Medieval drama, just like that of ancient Greece, had its origin in religious observances. A comparison of the two is interesting as revealing the chief characteristics of a work like the one under discussion. Both types of drama had their source in ritual elements recited by a chorus to which were gradually added individual reciters who created drama when they began to speak as characters in the first person; these actors came to assume greater importance as in the course of development the function of the chorus shrank more and more. Both presented stories from traditional lore with which the audiences were well acquainted and both embroidered these plots according to the inspiration and fancy of individual authors. Since the material was religious, the manner of staging and the typical presentation of certain

The prose translation of this play will be published by the Columbia University Press in May.

characters were pretty well established by tradition. Neither stage knew of our modern curtain and both interrupted the action at times by choral odes, more or less closely related to the plot. In both, women's roles were generally presented by men and masks were employed, at least for some characters.

But it should be noted that the medieval drama lacked the qualities we designate by the term classical. Greek drama emphasized concentration and thus only the most essential scenes were presented on the stage, leaving the rest to be narrated in the course of the dialogue; in the medieval drama everything is presented on a stage that has no unity of place but represents numerous settings to which the actors move in turn — the synagogue, Pilate's house, Heaven, Hell, and so forth. There is also a "neutral stage" which, like the Shakespearean, has no scenery and may serve for any location; in this play it is located in the center and has as stage property a huge barrel (*dolium*). Classical restraint was also absent on the medieval stage where killing and torture were freely shown. The language, in the beginning at least, was Latin and the spirit was other-worldly; while the ancient drama was in the native tongue and was an unhampered expression of the Greek spirit — critical, skeptical, filled with exuberant joy of the senses, and making man the measure of all things.

The origin of the Easter plays is generally thought to be contained in four lines of the Church ritual composed about the year 900 by a cleric at the monastery of St. Gall in Switzerland as an embellishment of the Easter Mass. Originally it was sung by two choruses as part of the *Introitus,* generally referred to as the *Quem quaeritis*:

> Whom seek ye in the sepulchre, O Christians?
> Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified, O Heavenly Ones.
> He is not here, He is arisen as He foretold.
> Go, tell that He has risen from the grave.

Hundreds of extant texts show how this liturgical dialogue developed in the course of centuries into such works as the *Redentin Easter Play.* Already before the year 1000 these lines passed from choruses to individual priests who recited them as the angels at the Tomb and as the Three Marys. Next, Mary Magdalene was given an individual role

as she was shown by an angel the shroud where the body of Christ had lain. Then the apostles John and Peter who ran to the grave after they had heard Mary Magdalene's report were included. At this point the singing by the congregation of the Easter hymn, *Christ ist erstanden,* was added. Next came a freely invented character, the vendor of ointments who sells his wares to the Marys and serves to introduce a bit of popular humor into the plot. Similarly, satire was expended on the watchmen whom Pilate sends to guard the sepulchre; of course the addition of these figures brought with it Pilate and the high priests of the Jews.

Regarding the words from the creed "He descended into Hell" there are no details given in the Bible, but an apocryphal text very popular in the Middle Ages, the Gospel of Nicodemus, relates in detail the harrowing of Hell and the liberation for Heaven of Adam, Eve, Noah, Isaiah, and other "saints" who had been confined in limbo by the devils. This addition to the plot increased the number of characters greatly. A free invention of medieval authors arose out of the situation of Lucifer after Hell had been depopulated: he sends out his devils to fill it once more and they bring in the baker, the butcher, the innkeeper, the tailor, and numerous others who are then tried before Lucifer (a court scene is always good drama!) and awarded punishments to fit their particular crimes. These scenes provide good popular humor with no doubt local applications and they served to inculcate practical moral lessons. The man of the Middle Ages feared the devil, and therefore he enjoyed no form of humor more than seeing his adversary outwitted — as is done by the clergyman in the Redentin play. The devil scenes were extremely popular and in this play, for example, Lucifer's efforts after his defeat by Christ to fill Hell once more with victims take up fully half of the drama or about a thousand lines. The first thousand lines deal with the efforts of the Jews to have the tomb guarded, Pilate's setting of the watchmen, Christ's resurrection, the harrowing of Hell, the procession of the saints to Heaven, and the frustration of the other enemies of Christ, the Jews.

These last remarks indicate that the general statement regarding lack of unity in medieval plays finds something of an exception in the Redentin play where extreme symmetry

is the rule. The late professor of German at Harvard, Kuno Francke, in his *Personality in German Literature* gives a fine appreciation of the drama calling it "this truly classic Redentin Easter play." With great logical unity scene follows scene in the first part from the time the Jews petition Pilate to the humiliation of the watchmen and the high priests about twenty-four hours afterward; one could almost say that the first part (and the second part in its turn also) observes the unity of time. Indeed there is a clever bit of foreshortening at the climax, when the joy of the saints in limbo and the fear of the devils in their council are in actual time simultaneous with the resurrection — all leading up to the harrowing of Hell. These two groups of characters are joined by a third, Christ with his angels, and there follows a scene full of dramatic conflict that, with its choral singing, must have been very effective. The playwright also knew the use of dramatic economy, inasmuch as he does not stop to present on the stage the traditional scene of the visit of the Marys to the sepulchre but has this related by one of the watchmen.

As already indicated, the play was performed on the so-called "simultaneous stage" on which the various "mansions" all stand in full view of the spectators and the players pass from one to the other as the action requires. The wagon stages of English mysteries were never used in Germany, nor are the settings arranged in a row on one side of the market-place as in the well-known picture of the Valenciennes play; from extant German stage plans it appears that Heaven was generally placed at one end of the market place (or church) and Hell at the other. Symbolism demanded certain groupings, near Hell were located the abodes of the forces of evil, e.g. the house of Pilate and the synagogue. The most elaborate mansion generally was the realm of the devils equipped with a smoke-exuding dragon's mouth. The make-up of the devils was in conformity with what we see in pictorial art of the day, usually masks with horns and otherwise "satanic" touches. Christ was marked by a red robe symbolizing his bloody death, the angels, of course, had wings and white robes, Adam and Eve appeared in close-fitting garments simulating nakedness covered with leaves, David came on with a harp and a crown, Noah carried a miniature ark,

and John the Baptist was dressed in rough garb to represent camel's skin. With the anachronism found also in medieval painters, Pilate appeared as a German prince and the watchmen as medieval knights wearing armor. The anti-semitism of the day caused the Jews to be dressed in "outlandish," somewhat ridiculous caps with tassels and gowns painted with suns, moons, and stars.

The only extant manuscript of this play is found in the library at Karlsruhe, written on twelve quarto pages. The language is Middle Low German. It was first edited by F. J. Mone in 1846 and has since appeared in numerous other editions as well as translations into modern German, but none so far into any other language. Because the text is preceded by a scholastic disquisition on Christ it is generally thought that the author was a cleric. At the end is a notation to the effect that it was finished in Redentin, November 20, 1464. The play is written in rhymed couplets of irregular length, which this translation reproduces fairly closely. The present version is cut by about one half for reasons of space.

The author, even if a cleric, was well acquainted with the speech of the common people, as can be seen from the numerous proverbs and the racy language used. He shows himself to be a thorough artist in the adroit characterization with which he manages to individualize his numerous *dramatis personae*: Pilate, the Jews, the four watchmen, John the Baptist, the cleric, Adam and Eve, and the various craftsmen, as well as Lucifer with his viceroy Satan and the other devils. The figure of Christ is treated throughout with deep awe, while vice and wickedness appear ludicrous. There is not the least doubt that the general purpose of the play was a high seriousness, culminating in the joyous community singing of the triumphal Easter hymn.

Mr. Zucker is responsible for the literal translation and this introduction, while Mr. and Mrs. Russell supply the rhymes and the verve of the text.

THE REDENTIN EASTER PLAY

PART ONE

Scene 1. *Dolium*

First Angel *says:*

Silence, all folk,
Full purse and empty poke!
You shall have it shown and said
How He rose up from the dead,
God's own son, the good Jesus,
Who gave up his life for us.
His uprising for to see
Now prepare right joyfully!

Second Angel:

Sit down with good cheer,
All men gathered here.
Be happy today,
You may put sin away.
God will count with his own
Those who let sin alone:
Souls who rise with Him this morn
Shall be in their hearts reborn:
That this may happen to all here,
Give eye, give ear!

Scene 2. *Synagogue.*

First Jew:

Cayphas, and ye lords of might,
I shall counsel you aright!
He claimed He was God's son, and said
That He would rise up from the dead.
He spoke in words as gruesome then
As ever heard from any men:
On the third day He would rise!
So I bid you to be wise:
Guard the grave as best you may,
So the corpse can't get away.
If His disciples take him out
By stealth, they'll say He rose no doubt.

CAYPHAS *says:*

If you act on my good wit
You shall see that haste is fit
And shall run to Pilate's court
And present a full report
Of all that you yourself have heard.

FIRST JEW:

We'll go at once and tell each word.

SCENE 3. *House of Pilate.*

FIRST JEW *to* PILATE:

Lord Pilate, God greet you!

PILATE:

What news? Speak up, Jew!

SECOND JEW:

Pilate, we are in great need,
By the living God give heed —
God who made the world so wide.
This same Jesus, whom you tried,
Let him be well guarded now
We're afraid his men somehow
Will take the corpse off by a ruse
And go spread abroad the news
That he rose up from his place:
Then we'll suffer sore disgrace.

PILATE *says:*

By God, Jew! I think you rave!
Can the dead leap from the grave?
Stop this foolish talk; instead,
Go yourselves and guard the dead.

FIRST JEW:

Pilate, patience with us yet,
(Upon my word, I can't forget):
His men heard Jesus roundly say
That He would rise on the third day.
This they heard him plainly boast,
And we fear his mighty host;
Such a vast, unnumbered rout,
They could take the corpse right out.
Give us men,
Lord Pilate, then.

PILATE *says:*

If I want to get some rest,
I must grant you your request!

PILATE *says to the soldiers:*

Listen, knights, men proud and bold,
You shall get both silver and gold
To guard Jesus, him, I mean,
Whom men call the Nazarene.

FIRST SOLDIER:

See now, what's the reason why
We should watch a dead man lie.
You are afraid where there's nothing to fear.

SECOND SOLDIER:

How could they hurt us? What nonsense I hear!
Let's pocket their gold
And go as we're told!
If we have three to pull the trick
We'll watch a dead man or a quick.

FIRST SOLDIER:

Faith, then, let me guard him, too;
He'll not flourish if I do!
If he rise up from the dead,
I shall hit him on the head!

FIRST JEW:

Knights, you'll have no cause to rue —
Everything I say is true:
If you watch and never wink,
You will hear the money clink,
Cash for pay.

CHORUS:

Thus they went their way.

SCENE 4. *Pilate's House to the Tomb.*

PILATE'S SERVANT:

Step aside, all folk,
Full purse and empty poke:
You shall clear out of this street,
Leave it for lord Pilate's feet.
He is for a matter sent
By the Jews, on profit bent.

Scene 5. *The Tomb.*

Pilate (*near the tomb*) :

Solomon, you are the best;
You shall lie here in the west.
You'll guard Jesus steadfastly
That he may not escape me!
If you let him through your hand
You'll be banished from this land!

(*The soldiers take their posts: west, north, east, south.* Pilate *leaves them and they fall asleep.*)

Scene 6. *The Tomb.*

Angels *together.* Raphael *sings above the tomb.*

Sleep, ye watchmen by a bier!
Since the Lord hath mission here.
Let it not disturb thy rest,
Nor pay it heed — 'tis God's behest!

Fourth Angel *says:*

Arise, O Lord, Thou Son of God;
We are subject to Thy nod!
Arise, O Comforter Divine!
Thou hast borne our guilt as Thine;
All things hast thou now fulfilled,
Put on manhood as God willed,
Rise up now, O man and God!
The way of sorrows Thou hast trod
Ends in this grave: rise from Thy night!
Thou art our everlasting Light!

(*Then there is an earthquake.*) Jesus *arising sings:*

Now all things are fully wrought,
The courses of eternal thought:
The bitter death upon the cross,
The salvage of mankind from loss!
Therefore I quit this earthen cell
And straightway shall proceed to hell;
I shall fetch thence both Adam and Eve,
All my loved ones shall receive,
Those born to sit on God's right side,
Whom Lucifer hath lost through pride!

Scene 7. *The ante-chamber of Hell.*
After this Abel *says to the souls exulting in hell:*

Now I ask you who endure
All together this torture
What this great light signifies
We behold there in the skies?

Adam:

Rejoice ye in this hour who sit
Forlorn within this darksome pit!
No more we bend beneath the rod:
This is the light of Father God
Which He promised would proceed
From Him to help us in our need!

Isaiah:

I am Isaiah, a prophet, lo!
Now for certain you may know
This is God's light which doth shine
As foretold in books of mine!
The nation of heathen that wandered in night
Saw with great certainty God's holy light,
Those who were living in lands of the dead,
Over their sorrowing, brightness is shed.
This is He in whom I trust
To redeem us from the dust.

Simeon:

I the old man, Simeon!
Now rejoice ye, everyone;
All together praise the Lord,
Whom I, for my great reward,
Cradled in the temple when he
As a gracious child came to me!
Then my joy was sweet as spring,
And I spoke thus: "Heaven-born king,
Let me now depart in peace,
On this earth my footsteps cease;
Since mine eyes Thy glory see,
Let me, lord, partake of Thee!"

Simeon (*to the* Baptist):

Who is this strange man, I pray,
Wearing this rough garment gray?

From the world he's newly won!
Hast thou tidings of God's son?

JOHN THE BAPTIST:

Verily, John the Baptist I,
On mission sent by God most high,
A herald of the Christ to be,
And preach His word accordingly.
In the desert, night and day,
I taught, and so prepared the way.
In the Jordan Him I dipped,
Though His soul had never slipped;
Yet He wished all things fulfilled
And I did as Jesus willed!
With my hand I pointed, "See,
Christ the Saviour, this is He.
He, the very Lamb of God,
Has the way from heaven trod!
He will bear the sins of all!
He is my lord, I am His thrall!"
He Himself is now close by
To redeem us from this sty!

SCENE 8. *The Dolium.*

LUCIFER:

Come one, come all, get up, get out,
The whole damned, devilish rout!
Jump from hell, come up here,
Satan, companion dear!

SATAN:

Lucifer, my imps and I
Leap from hell where we did lie!

LUCIFER:

Satan, I've a mind to skin you!
For three days where have you been to?
What's come to your wicked ear?

SATAN:

Aha, Lucifer lord, just hear!
I have been among the Jews:
There I snatched a piece of news —
Treasure without parallel:

LUCIFER:
Hurry, Satan, speak and tell!

SATAN:
Jesus, lord and prophet fine,
Who declared He was divine,
We'll soon catch Him at a loss:
He was hanging on a cross,
Where His anguish was full sore,
And He shuddered at death's door.
How could He be God's own son
When away from death He'd run?

LUCIFER:
God eternal cannot die!
You won't save us with that lie!
He has overthrown death's spell
And comes now to harrow hell!

SATAN:
Master, Lucifer, believe!
I was near Him on the hill,
When He testament and will
Made, and drank the bitter gall.
To our hands He'll surely fall:
I helped spear Him to the heart,
Saw Him suffer death's deep smart!

CROOK-NOSE:
By the crook nose on my face,
This is certainly the case!
I myself was standing by
Waiting for a soul to die:
His name was Judas — I got him then —
He'd been one of Jesus' men:
High upon a stormy slope
I helped hang him with a rope.
I saw Jesus twist and squirm,
Writhe and wiggle like a worm.
Then He groaned, gave up the ghost:
We shall have Him for a roast!

LUCIFER:
Satan, when His spirit fled,
Which direction did it head?

SATAN:

Why, lord Lucifer, I got flurried
When you called and, hither scurried,
And I lost the pretty pet!

LUCIFER:

His sun rises, ours will set
He will stretch us on the rack!

SATAN:

Here's a plan: we'll call a pack
Of hell-hounds, and full-armed in hate,
Hold against Him hell's hard gate!

NOYTOR:

Lucifer, I wonder why
The souls of many people cry —

PUCK:

Must we tolerate this row?
Let's get back to hell right now:
All our guests have been invited
And the fires ready lighted.
Can it be that Christ comes here?
Gentlemen, have done with fear!
Quickly come, friends foul and fell,
Let us fly and close up hell!

SCENE 9. *The Hell-Mouth.*

Then JESUS *approaches hell. When* DAVID *sees him coming from a distance he says:*

Now comes our Lord, sweet heavenly Balm,
Who said: "Portas hereas confringam!"
In the scripture 'twas decreed
He would help us in our need
And destroy this great bronze door
Utterly, forevermore.
Redeem Thy people, nor in vain
Let them implore Thee in their pain.

ADAM *says:*

Altogether now rejoice,
Who have hearkened to God's voice!
Oh sing aloud, ye saints, oh sing
To welcome our eternal King!

EVE:

Hail to Thee, blest Consolation
Of the Sad! In degradation
And in darkness, awful here,
We have waited many a year.
Thou hast pitied our infernal
Plight. Oh, lead to bliss eternal!

(*Then* JESUS *comes up to hell with angels preceding Him.*)

GABRIEL:

Prince of Night, unlock thy gates!
Lo, the King of Glory waits!

LUCIFER:

Who, pray, is this savage one
That comes raging on the run,
Acting like the whole world's king?
He might spare us such a thing.

RAPHAEL, *the third angel:*

This is the living God's own Child!
He will redeem with mercy mild
These souls and lead them out of hell
Within His Father's house to dwell!

LUCIFER:

Stop your storming, my good men!
These are my souls in this pen!

GABRIEL, *the second angel:*

Open now, thou Prince of Sin,
Or thou'lt be betrayed within!
In thy hell and in this hour
Thou shalt be by Heaven's power
Bound with an eternal chain
Long as God the King shall reign!

LUCIFER (*to* DAVID):

Who is this King, what is said of Him?

DAVID:

In the scripture I've read of Him.
He is the Lord, the Conqueror,
Mighty in honor, mighty in war,
He has created the world that we live in!

LUCIFER:

Alas, we are lost, we might as well give in!
Useless our weapons and all our defenses:
When the King comes, then our trouble commences!

JESUS:

By My brightness, I command thee,
Open, gate, and quickly, to Me,
Or I'll crash this great bronze door
And free My people by the score!

SATAN:

What right has this man in scarlet
To belabor us, the varlet!
He's no gentleman, I can tell,
That he thus comes down to hell!

JESUS:

Silence, Satan, thou evil drake!
Silence, thou damned malignant snake!
Now fly open, ye gates of hell!
Come, my dear ones; this citadel
And thy long imprisonment flee!
I was hanged on the gallows tree
For the sake of the saints who do my will!
Much anguish I suffered, much blood did I spill.
In my body five wounds me pained:
For this Lucifer shall be chained
Until the day of the last judgment —
Suffer eternal punishment!

(*Then with great violence He harrows hell.*)

JESUS:

Away from here, begone!
Hell's fellows, every one!

And He seizes LUCIFER. JESUS *says:*

Lucifer, mankind's foul bane,
I shall bind thee with this chain!
Gape away thy days in hell;
My dear ones shall be spared thy spell!
Straightway to My Father's place
I shall lead you, where His grace
Has prepared His light divine

Endlessly for you to shine!
(*And He grasps* ADAM *by the right hand.*)
Adam, give Me thy good right hand!
Blessed and saved before Me stand:
All thy sins I now forgive thee
That thou sinned long since against Me!

ADAM:

Honor be to Thee and praise,
Lord of all the world always!

JESUS:

All of you who God obey
Shall in Heaven lodge this day!

TUTEVILLUS *seizes* JOHN, *saying:*

Hey, you in the shaggy fell,
Stay here with us folks in hell!
This elephant hide that you are lapped in
Is just the thing for us to be wrapped in
When the rain begins to spill!
Don't you know I'm Tuteville!
You must do whatever I will!
You're the last, you're under arrest:
We'll make you pay; stay in the nest!

JOHN THE BAPTIST:

Let me go untouched, I say!
I was saved before this day!
Jesus paid my bail
So I'm not in jail!
Let me alone now; if you dare —
I'll hit hard and you know where!

PUCK *says:*

Master Lucifer, I say!
You sure played the fool today!
There you stand like a dupe and a joke!
You ought to be hung by your feet in the smoke!

LUCIFER:

I'm lost! I'm ruined! I'm ravaged! Help!
A pox may be on this scarlet whelp!
He's got what rightly belongs to us!
Was anyone ever cheated thus!

Scene 10. *Procession from Hell to Heaven.*

Jesus:

Michael, my archangel, shining and free,
Adam and Eva commend I to thee,
And all my saints whom so dearly I love:
Lead them to paradise. Safely above,
There let them wait for me till I again
Come to them. See that they suffer no pain!

Michael:

Son of the Father, all-holiest One,
On earth and in heaven Thy will shall be done!

(*He leads the souls into Paradise.*)

The Angel:

Now by His death Christ makes you fit!
I am to lead you to a door
Where hangs a sharpened sword before,
But fear ye not the flashing blade
Step through the gateway unafraid,
Awaken in that joyous hall
Where God himself shall greet you all!

Scene 11. *The Tomb.*

Watchman *sings a verse and then says:*

Awake, my knights, the day is nigh!
The morning star sings in the sky.

(*He blows his horn three times and then says*):

On the fields is morning dew:
Wake, my knights, and up with you!
If you knights were lying snugger
With a truelove, hugger mugger,
If that were your interest,
I'd not call you from the nest,
At morn:
But you are lying all forlorn!
Arise, 'tis morn!

(*He again blows his horn three times, then says:*)

Help! Help! Help! I say!
Are you going to sleep all day?
The sun is shining on your tail!
The pigs have gobbled up the pail!

After the blowing of the horn the First Soldier *says:*

Knights and squires, get off the ground!
Damn it, we have slept too sound!
Dreadful things I have to say:
Jesus Christ is risen today!

Second Soldier:

Why, man, the thing's as plain as day:
His men have stolen the corpse away!

Third Soldier:

Alas, the sleep which we have slept!
Oh, that the watch ourselves we'd kept!
How shall we escape disgrace
When we go to Pilate's place?

Fourth Soldier:

Now that we've let Christ get loose
We're sure to hear, with foul abuse,
That it's our fault he got away!
But on our innocence let's play!
Why should they bar us from the land?
We'll dodge it by a clever stand:
Let's go to Cayphas and the Jews
So they'll be first to hear the news!

Scene 12. *The Synagogue.*

They go to the synagogue where the First Soldier *says:*

Grace, lord Bishop!

Cayphas:

Sirrah, speak up!
What is this you've come to tell?
Did you guard the dead man well?
Speak up, whatever it is you know.

First Soldier:

My lord, and Jews, believe it so:
In this same night
We suffered a terrific fright!
An earthquake shook us, great and grim --
We thought our chance of life was slim:
Then our senses left us flat!

Cayphas:

Well, get out! Enough of that!
Fancy, such a knightly host!

Couldn't you have quit your post,
Told us of this earthquake rare?
We'd have sent more soldiers there.

SECOND SOLDIER:

Cayphas, let me talk some too!
If this thing had chanced to you
You'd be too weak to rail and scold!
Now the whole thing shall be told.
Cayphas, here's the truth, I swear:
Jesus is not lying there;
He arose with steady knee,
And made way to Galilee!

ANNAS:

Listen to that monkey patter!
What is this he seems to chatter?
Can a man rise from the dead,
Or a corpse get out of bed?
Stones we piled atop the grave
So that none himself might save.
On it then we placed our seal,
So I know he could not steal
Thence without the aid of ghouls.
Gracious, you are really fools!

FOURTH SOLDIER:

Annas, must you play the dunce?
Stop that kind of talk at once!
Now the truth you've got to hear:
An angel came from heaven clear —
On a bright cloud he did ride —
Called the women to his side
By the grave, said to the three:
"Jesus Christ of Nazareth, He
Whom you seek, rose up today,
And to Galilee made way!"
Otherwise it cannot be:
God has got the victory!

After they had held a council, CAYPHAS *says:*

Trusty knights and heroes rash,
Here now, take a little cash!
Forget the talk you overheard

Beside the grave. Right? Not a word!
If men ask where the body stays
Say this (and you will earn my praise):
"The corpse was stolen by his men!"
We'll keep the truth well hidden then!

First Soldier:

Surely we won't go and shout it!
But if Pilate asks about it,
We will tell him all that passed
Before our eyes, from first to last!

Annas:

We'll handle Pilate, never fear.
But, pray, don't let the People hear!

First Soldier:

All right, Annas, we're not queasy,
We'll be quiet — it's very easy.
Be this matter what it may:
Galilee knows anyway!

(*Then the soldiers leave for their station* [*at the Tomb*] *and the Jews hold a council.*)

Scene 13. *House of Pilate.*

Pilate *says to his page:*

Page, page, here, boy, you!

Page:

Good, my lord, what shall I do?

Pilate:

Hurry now to Jesus' grave,
Bring me back the news I crave.
Tell those knights to come to court
And present a full report.

Page:

That, my lord, I'll gladly do:
Take this word to them from you!

Scene 14. *The Tomb.*

(*He runs to sepulchre and says to the soldiers:*)

Good my knights, God give you greeting!
Come away, the time is fleeting;
Pilate now desires to see
All of you immediately.

THIRD SOLDIER:

Alas, alas, then, we must go!
He's going to scold us, that I know!

SCENE 15. *House of Pilate.*

They appear before Pilate. FOURTH SOLDIER:

Grace, lord king!

PILATE:

Well, my knights, how's everything?
Tell me what you did last night;
All that passed before your sight?

FIRST SOLDIER:

Pilate, lord king!
We saw the strangest thing!
This is news indeed,
Mighty news, I plead:
Jesus, whom your stoutest men
Were to watch, is risen again!

PILATE:

Yes, I might have known before.
You lost him then, you careless four!

SECOND SOLDIER:

Yes, lord Pilate, that is true!
We are sad as any Jew!

PILATE:

Knights, how this thing chanced to be,
Shall you now confess to me!

SECOND SOLDIER:

Pilate, from God's throne on high
Did his brightest angels fly:
Took the Christ away from here.
Do you wonder at our fear!
Angels gathered round the grave,
Took this Jesus from his cave:
He was quick and glad to be
With them, so it seemed to me.
They led him toward a shining light
All in my sleep I saw this sight.

PILATE:

How could you see in sleep so dense?
That doesn't make the slightest sense.

When I see something, I'm awake!
You made that up, for your skin's sake!
And now with sleeping are you through?
I'd like to put you to the screw!

THIRD SOLDIER:

This is what we get for pay
Since we went to sleep that way,
When he thought we'd be on guard!
My, the punishment is hard!

PILATE:

It seems to me Christ has disgraced you
As well as every double-faced Jew!
Why dawdle here since your report?
In ignominy leave the court!

SCENE 16. *The Synagogue.*

Then they go to the Jews. FOURTH SOLDIER:

Cayphas, Pilate raised a stink!
Swore so loud we couldn't think!
We need counsel in tough places:
Put us back in his good graces!
If that doesn't happen soon,
I and my companions boon
Louder than you want to hear
Shout how Jesus left His bier!

CAYPHAS:

Good knights, have done, forget you're sore.
We said when you were here before
That we would free and reinstate you:
We'll see that Pilate doesn't bait you!

ANNAS:

Good knights, if Pilate's at your throat,
Then take along this little note
And bid him have it quickly read,
For it will stand you in good stead!
Say to him when the scribe shall cease,
We are his slave and wish him peace!

SCENE 17. *House of Pilate.*

FOURTH SOLDIER:

Pilate, dear lord, to make amends,

The Jewish Priest his service sends!
Here is a message from his hand,
Read it that you may understand!

PILATE:

Here, scribe, what does the letter say?

SCRIBE:

I'll tell you, lord, if read I may,
Pilate, my lord, lord Pilate, dear,
Are you certain you wish to hear?

PILATE:

Yes, scribe, yes. Read it, man!

SCRIBE:

I will read as best I can.
This is what the Jews record:
Greetings to you, Pilate lord:
Cayphas, Jewish Bishop he,
Annas, Bishop formerly,
Each and every Jewish nation,
Send you, lord, their adoration,
Service long, peace without end,
Beg you now their cause attend:
These four knights
Their lost rights
Give again graciously:
This they'd be glad to see.

PILATE *says:*

Well, knights, I've heard the Jewish plea!
Come back, you four, and fight for me!
Be true
And you
Shall have your goods and place.
It seems to me the Jews are in disgrace!
Jesus, God's son Whom they bled,
Is arisen from the dead:
This they'd like to hide away
But with sorrow they shall pay,
And their words on Friday last
They shall rue till time is past.
I'd gladly have set Him free,
Guiltless said I wished to be,

Then the Jews — oh heedless choice —
Cried aloud with brutal voice,
"We care not for His boasted powers,
His blood come over us and ours!"
Now the world will come to see
Jewish shame unendingly.

PART TWO

(*The setting for the entire second part is the Dolium*)

Scene 18.

(*Then the devils lead out* Lucifer *in chains. He sits down on the Dolium and laments*)

Dear fellows, thank you from my heart
That still you serve me in good part.
What once was mine I'll have and keep,
You hear me swear both loud and deep.
Very little news you've got —
Griping grief is not our lot:
Gone indeed is hell's front gate,
Smashed by Jesus, God so great.
That was indeed a doleful stroke!
He snatched away the souls of folk
That we, five thousand years and more,
Had tortured till their bones were sore.
Now we've lost them, every one,
Since Christ Jesus, God's own son,
Took them to His Father's house,
Whence we poor things like a louse,
Were shamefully kicked out, pell-mell;
Now we bite our nails in hell!
Let us never be afraid,
Keep our chins up, undismayed:
Though the saints escape our clasp,
We may yet the sinners grasp!
Since the Lord despises fools
Who love to sin and break His rules,
Since He runs the world this way,
Let's use His sun to make our hay,
Teach mankind such foul desires
That they'll fall into our fires.

Every imp in this be true —
Know that he'll his failure rue —
Trick alike the wise and dumb,
Fill hell up, so kingdom come.

Then he turns to SATAN *and says:*

Satan, servant tried and true,
Did you hear my orders through?

SATAN *answers:*

Oh, Lucifer, dear lord and star,
For us no road shall be too far!
Whoever lives and bears a sin,
We certainly shall rope him in.

LUCIFER:

So bring them in, the poor and rich —
Let none escape your tar and pitch —
The usurer, the robber chief,
Counterfeiter, small milk thief,
The pastry cook and the magician,
The dog trainer, the lie technician,
The maltster and the brewer ripe,
And fetch us all who deal in tripe;
The tinker, and him who loafs all day,
The fuller and him who drives the sleigh,
The flax-breaker and tanner smite,
And don't forget the false wheelwright,
The verger and the sexton bring,
The carp-roaster — we'll make him sing —
The writer and the one who reads,
The plowman, coachman — fill my needs;
Bring me the puppet-player, too,
For taking money — from fools, it's true;
Bring me the knight and the lord of the land;
Let not a one of them slip through your hand;
Bring me the tailor, bring me the smith,
Chain them all up with their kin and their kith;
Bring me the seer and the evil old wives,
Don't let the rascals escape with their lives!
What good does it do you to hesitate?
Begone from this place on your mission of hate!

All of them recede from Lucifer. Satan *says to the others:*

Come, gentlemen, be very wise;
Beware at all costs, I advise,
Dissention with Pope Lucifer.
Now on the road yourselves bestir
And labor for the lord of hell:
The last's a whoreson! Fare thee well!

Scene 19.

Lucifer (*calling to his followers, cries out in a loud voice*):

East, south, west, north!
Come here, from all my forts come forth!
Well done, well done, come here,
You Satan and Flop-ear!

(*When the devils do not hear him, he calls again and* Satan *appears.*)

Satan:

What news, O Master dear?
You call so loud and clear.
I've run to you like fire,
Now what is your desire?

Lucifer:

I don't know what I'd better say
Since your companions went away
And hid themselves and do not come!
Now tell me, don't you know of some?
Where they went and where they are,
What they're doing out afar,
Because they do not come? — for shame!
And yet I call each imp by name.

Satan:

Lucifer, I'll tell, don't doubt it,
You won't have to ask about it.
Now the truth is, master dear,
Devils hide not far from here,
Huddled close together all,
Sore affrighted of your gall;
They've been gone a long time now;
Neither force nor love, I vow
Will bring them back to you this way

And make them dance when pipes you play,
Or let you lead them by the nose.
The reason why I shall disclose —
The people now in general,
If they be greater men or small,
Have changed themselves to please the Lord,
Are with their God in full accord,
And all our clever teachings flout.
Well, Lucifer, I've let it out
Why none before you dare appear.

LUCIFER:

Could that be true, my servant dear?
They should not flee the wrath of hell —
Already 'tis a bagatelle.
Now therefore hasten speedily:
Go say to them immediately,
That they may keep their honor bright
And come to me with all their might
Whenever they hear my voice resound,
And I'll try hard — that I'll be bound —
To teach them cunning like a fox
That they may make them heterodox
Who late my wicked will obeyed
But now from devil-craft have strayed.

SATAN:

Lucifer, dear lord, I'll do it
If they'll have no cause to rue it.
Now your voice they'll gladly hear
And run quickly without fear.

LUCIFER *again cries out and says to those who have come:*

Welcome, my dear imps, and praise.
This is like the olden days;
You've all been to my school in hell
And learned your lessons passing well:
I thought you very clever men
But now I'll have to start again,
And as to little babies prattle
Who are as stupid even as cattle!
All this I freely now forgive
If you will more like devils live,

And strive alike with hoof and claw
To let no souls escape our maw.

All the devils call out:
Lucifer, that's what we'll do,
More and more we'll work for you!

LUCIFER:
Let it be forgotten then!
But just hear me once again,
Now do at once the thing I say:
Make tracks for Lubeck right away;
Folks are dying by the score there,
Many souls I hope you will snare —
Bring them back with hullaballoo:
And this time come when I call you!

ASTROT:
Lord, we'll always do that now,
Even though it sweats our brow.

SCENE 20.

LUCIFER *calls as before.* PUCK *says:*
Lord Lucifer, my name is Puck,
On many a thorn my tail has stuck;
Now don't be mad and twist your features
We've every one caught lots of creatures;

LUCIFER:
Your speech has pleased me through and through
Now bring them for an interview!
And if the souls all look forlorn,
Then bring them up like sacks of corn.

And thus they carry the souls to LUCIFER. PUCK *says:*
Rejoice, O Lucifer, dear lord!
Praise and honor us accord!
See how they stand before you here,
Who hearkened when we caught their ear!

ASTROT:
Just see this beautiful parade;
With fried eggs now we should be paid,
And if you added ham and bread
Our drink would find a softer bed!

FLOP-EAR:

We landed, lord, upon our feet;
These souls we garnered — aren't they sweet? —

LUCIFER:

Let the souls step one by one,
While you say what each has done,
Then I'll make it more than plain
What we'll do to give them pain.

NOYTOR (*to* LUCIFER):

Lord, this is the sort of trash
I'd contribute to your hash;
Here's a soul for the fattening pen!

LUCIFER (*to* NOYTOR):

You may have this egg half-hatched by the hen!

LUCIFER (*to the* BAKER):

The bran is dropping from your nose,
So you're a baker, I suppose!
Well, well, what have you to say
Since they hauled you in this way?
Now tell the truth, a lie's a sin,
Wouldn't heaven let you in?

BAKER:

Mercy, lord, this is no lie,
Till this day a baker, I,
But now, my God, a sorry oaf!
I used to hollow out the loaf;
I mixed my dough with so much leaven
One loaf would rise as high as seven;
And then when too much dough I had
I broke it off — now that was bad —
And threw it back into the trough,
Alas, that ever I broke it off!
I made my cakes with naught but bran,
The people cursed — my fall began;
I did not thoroughly bake the bread
And so I cheated those I fed.
If life were given anew to me,
I'd never again a baker be!

LUCIFER:

My clever devils, you've done well!
Go toss this baker into hell —

By the glowing oven make him a seat
He'll find it's hotter than bakehouse heat!
He baked bread with too thin a crust,
So beat him till you raise the dust!
He merits all that is to follow
For baking doughy bread and hollow.

(*The devils also bring in a shoemaker and a tailor.*)

PUCK:

My name is Puck; I'm number four.
My stomach's huge — just hear it roar!
My bellicose business I dare state —
In well-stocked cellars I lie in wait;
When the bar-maid blinks her eye
And does not fill the tankard high,
Then I usually touch her hand
And jostle the cup — you understand.
If she should fill a good full measure,
We'd lose her soul, the priceless treasure.
I think it's better that I should bring
Them all before you, Lucifer, king:
Into your power deliver them all.

LUCIFER (*to* PUCK):

You may have what the sow lets fall.
(*To the* INN-KEEPER)
By wit I tell you your trade and sin,
You are a fellow who keeps an inn!
I read it plainly upon your face:
The mugs are never full at your place!

INN-KEEPER:

Why deceive you? I skimped the drink!
It seems you know whatever I think.
I always made a big batch of beer
Because of my method, expounded here:
I got my water right out of the slough,
Water is cheap — there's too much anyhow!
Also, whenever I sold beer or wine,
This was another old habit of mine:
I stuck my thumb in the glass — d'you follow? —
And served my beer with a three inch collar.
When measuring ale for a tippler or sot,
That was a lesson I never forgot;

With the second boiling I served a good many,
And thus I contrived to earn a fat penny.

LUCIFER *cries out*:

You're a great fool from your head to your heel:
You smell as bad as a buzzard's meal!
You'll be disgraced when I tell the rest —
Half of your sins are unconfessed!
You told us all of the foam, in brief,
But did not mention the thumb of the thief
On top of the vat, where it served you well.
Over and over you've earned your hell!

LUCIFER *speaks again:*

Come, my servants, stand always pat:
His pay is ready, now give him that:
A barrel for home like a hot little hovel,
And give him to drink with a red hot shovel!
Hang him up by his thumbs to the ceiling —
Those thumbs were guilty in all his dealing.
Because he served so little beer,
Reward him hugely, servants dear!

LUCIFER (*to the Butcher*):

Unless my brains have turned to stones,
You busied yourself by cracking bones!
I can tell by your mouth that drips —
Many intestines have passed your lips!

BUTCHER:

The truth, my lord, you guess and tell:
I cooked cow mouths very well.
And when the sausages I fixed
Everything together mixed:
Intestines, lungs, scraps and all that,
But put in not a bit of fat.
When put into the pan to fry
Old shoes could not have been more dry;
When I wanted sausages myself,
I reached the fat down from the shelf.

(*A huckster and a robber are brought in and sentenced.*)

DRUNK-AS-AN-OWL:

Lord, I'm Drunk-as-an-Owl, if you please;
I lay by the fence with a bottle to squeeze;

I listened at every crack and hole,
But I discovered no single soul,
Neither a priest nor a layman cheap;
So in my anger I went to sleep.
I sat there such a lengthy day,
Wolves might have gnawed my flesh away.
This is no joke, lord, no sirree.
You won't find many men like me!
If you hadn't called out so loud,
I'd have brought along a crowd.
You might give me a word of praise;
I'm puffing like a stove ablaze.

LUCIFER:

You shall suffer for it, wretch!
We'll see how far your neck will stretch!
When you hear me now, turn pale,
You shall climb an old wife's tail!
There'll you'll suffer from the stink;
Time shall slowly pass, I think.
You're good for nothing but to parch,
You're filthy as a cow in March!
You've failed and yet feel no remorse!
I never saw a worse plug horse;
Nor out among the lame and blind
Could I a greater sluggard find!
You chatterbox without a brain,
You stink like dog hair in the rain!
Since you don't like the rules I'm giving,
Go skin dead horses for a living!
You want to sleep, you want to shirk;
Even devils have to work!
Now let me be, go on, get out!
I'll have my other men about!

SCENE 21.

SATAN (*leading the* PRIEST, *speaking very softly*):

Brace up, brace up, Pastor John,
Lucifer will scold anon!
Cut your prayer a little short!
I can't wait here for your sort.
Your prayers weigh less with me than shavings!
Now when I pipe dance on hot pavings!

You prayed right blithely with your mouth,
But, sir, your soul was dry as drouth!
And your heart was hollow, see!
Come on, Bald Head, follow me!

PRIEST:

By the Holy Jesus dear,
Who are you that leads me here!
You might well have let me be
To read my hours piously!
With holy thoughts I filled my head;
God won't allow me to be led
By you, nor can your wicked will
Do me the slightest bit of ill.

SATAN:

Oh, what's the use of so much talk?
Come on, old Bald Head mustn't balk!
You make yourself too pure a saint,
But I can see behind your feint,
It makes no difference what you read,
Your hours often slipped your head.
You like to live with a can of booze
And in the tavern take your snooze.
Beer, not water, is to your taste!
Your belly's big as an elephant's waist!

SATAN (*to* LUCIFER):

Watch, my dear lord, eyes this way!
Here's a clergyman today;

LUCIFER:

Is it possible, my dear?
Can a priest be drawn down here?
I vow you shan't escape, you monk,
Though you have holy water drunk.
He can teach us from his stock,
Since he led astray his flock,
If it is as I have heard,
You preach against us, preach God's word;
The people dance after your pipe,
And that's why they're so hard to snipe!
Hear me, hear me, Mr. Priest!
Listen to one word, at least;

Stand a little to one side,
A priest close by I can't abide!

PRIEST:

What was that I heard from you?
Here you are and your men too,
And here am I, but all alone,
And yet I do not quake and moan!
If to keep me here's your will,
Then I must come closer still!

LUCIFER:

Ah, Satan, you'll be hanged for fair!
This priest already burns my hair;
He does it with his words of grace.
If he should come into our place,
We could not stay another minute;
We'd have to leave hell, and him in it!

PRIEST:

Do you believe, dear Lucifer,
I am so dull a crucifer
That I myself could not defend
And into hell needs must descend?
Hell is not the home for me:
There are enough of lay degree
Who well deserve to go ahead
Of me — I'll save my life instead!

LUCIFER:

Satan, let this priest retire!
I can't stand the scorching fire!
Perhaps he is a man God chose,
See, holy water tips his nose!
And incense is upon his back;
Oh, take away this praying hack!
He has read too many psalms;
Let him go and ease my qualms!

PRIEST:

Lucifer, you'd best take care!
Or you'll get another scare.
If Jesus storms your gates once more,
He will destroy you and your corps!

One thing alone I know is true,
My God's a better man than you!

LUCIFER:

You priests are all too debonair;
You scold us with too sharp an air!
The Lord has other occupations
Than to daily storm our stations!
Jesus of some souls has raped us,
But not nearly all escaped us!
It will not be long before
Spite the priests, we'll have a score!
My men and I can pull a trick
To catch a plenty of them quick!

SCENE 22.

LUCIFER (*again, lamenting*):

My pride has brought eternal scorn;
Oh, woe is me that I was born!
Ah, poor devils, led astray!
Who will pity me today
For my sins sinned in the past?
Could I now repent and fast,
I would suffer all these things
While time flew by on wooden wings!
There should be a monstrous tree
Standing here for all to see:
From the ground up to the top,
Shearing knives would never stop
Sticking out. Upon my crup
I'd ride this tree, down and up
Until Judgment Day, my bane!
I would shriek with frightful pain!
That I cannot thus do penance
Is of pride the awful sentence!
Pride's the fire where sin is lit,
Pride has sunk us in this pit!
Men have now the pleasure got
Which we devils may have not!
But we want to rope them in
When they're loaded down with sin.
We shall wait for each and all
Till they join us in the fall!

LUCIFER *speaks again:*

You probably heard what this priest swore;
Christ Jesus is to come once more!
So it seems very wise indeed
To fly to hell and make full speed
That we may watch with greatest care
Those souls already chained down there.
Oh, my sorrow's beyond belief;
I am heavy, sick with grief!
Would you carry me off to hell?

NOYTOR:

Yes, my master, we'll do it well!

LUCIFER:

Oh, my servants, don't hurt me, please!

NOYTOR:

Lucifer, lord, stretch out your knees!
Stretch them over my horny back;
Were you as great as a miller's sack
And had swallowed the whole of the miller's nag,
We'd carry you off like a bloated bag!
Come, my friends, take hold all round,
Lest his head roll on the ground!

(*And thus carry him, singing*):

Carry off the old fornicator!

SCENE 23.

THE EPILOGUE *ascends the Dolium and says:*

Hear a bit, I pray you all,
Men and women, great and small.
Quickly now without confusion,
We have reached our play's conclusion,
And if something's been forgot,
We implore you, blame us not!
From reading comes the recollection,
No man can ever reach perfection,
And seldom can a man of sense
Please each one in his audience.
Now for a final boon we ask
That you applaud our finished task;
And can it possibly be done,

We'll later play a better one!
In God above let us rejoice,
Divine commands fulfill by choice,
And with His holy grace to charm us
The evil spirit cannot harm us!
For He avenged us more than well
When for our sake He harrowed hell!
And Paradise He set apart,
Where peace awaits the heavy heart.
Rejoice, all men, rejoice and say
How Christ is risen on Easter Day!

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY

By Charles R. Hart

I wish to feel earth's beauty all day long,
From break of day until the even song,
Until Night lays her fingers on mine eyes,
Hiding all but the tree-tops and the skies:
This is the fixed, unchanging part of me,
And all the rest is mutability.

The glow above a book will not abide;
Most cherished talk to silence may subside;
There is no masterpiece on any wall
That holds my gaze until the evening fall;
The sweetest notes of any symphony
Are those I bear into the woods with me.

My joy in Nature grows with every year,
Unlike the poet's who once held her dear
But who beheld his youthful raptures fade,
For whom a silence fell along the glade.
This joy of riper years, not memory,
Sustains my hope of immortality.

WILLIAM SOMERSET MAUGHAM — DRAMATIST

By CLIFFORD M. MONTAGUE

When William Somerset Maugham, in 1933, announced to the world that he would write no more plays, the statement was tantamount to the ringing of a knell. That Maugham's announcement was something in the nature of a death-statement is shown by the fact that his passing from the scenes and props which he has helped build brought an end to an era in the history of drama — an era that perhaps will never again be rivalled or surpassed, either in the quality of the plays produced or the stage technique of the men who produced them. Perhaps the era really ended when the audiences, which were a necessary complement for the work that the era produced, passed from the scene or became interested in the motion pictures and an entirely different theatre.

The world is familiar with Maugham's striving for success — the long struggle before acceptance, then the sudden over-night fame — a fame unrivalled by any other dramatist in the world except Oscar Wilde. Throughout his works Maugham has touched on the matter; in his various prefaces, his travel books, and his autobiographical work, *The Summing Up,* he has told us how he worked. It would serve no purpose here to review those struggles, but a restatement of certain facts would not be amiss.

Maugham was born in Paris in 1874, the youngest son of Robert Ormand Maugham who was at the time the judicial advisor at the British Embassy. Originally, however, the paternal side of the family came from Ireland.

Orphaned at the age of ten, Maugham was sent to live with an aunt and uncle in Kent, England, and later entered Canterbury. It is this school of which he wrote, under the thin disguise of "Tercanbury," in *Of Human Bondage* — which, incidentally, is reputedly an accurate account of the first thirty years of the author's life, fictionized, of course.

Maugham first felt the urge to write when he was fifteen, but it was not until he was seventeen, when he prevailed upon his uncle to let him study abroad, and he attended

Heidelburg University, that he began to exercise his talents. At the insistence of his relatives that he study medicine (it was upon the extraction of this promise that he was allowed to go to Germany) Maugham, after two years at the University, entered St. Thomas's Hospital in London. It was there, studying medicine in the daytime and writing at night, that he finished his first book, *Liza of Lambeth.* He was then twenty. However, he finished his course in medicine, for which he received the degrees of M. R. C. S. and L. R. C. P. — Member of the Royal College of Surgeons and Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians, respectively. He never practised medicine but turned immediately to writing.

He started writing plays while still a student at the hospital, and he began with comedies the sole purpose of which was to amuse and entertain because of the large financial rewards accompanying a successful comedy. Realizing that women are persuasive and can induce a manager to produce a play, he has confessed that his early plays were fashioned with the definite aim of making his leading feminine roles of such appealing qualities that the parts would interest an actress who in turn might interest a producer. There was nothing reprehensible in such a method; it was only a natural means for a dramatist who had resolved to be successful in the commercial theatre. One of these plays, *Lady Frederick,* was put in production to fill the place of a play which had not had as great a success as was expected. Maugham's play was scheduled to run six weeks as a stop-gap until another play could be put on. It was an instantaneous hit, and after it became notably successful managers harassed him for more work. This was an unusual situation, but Maugham merited it by being an unusual dramatist. *Lady Frederick* ran for a year, and three other plays by the same author were also put on in London at about the same time.

Eventually a long string of successes came from his hand. They were successes, for the most part, in the field of comedy — the type of work with which he began his career. This is one of the reasons why he is so often compared with Oscar Wilde, for during his lifetime as a dramatist Maugham has been almost incessantly classed and categoried precisely with Wilde, and it must be admitted that there are a great many

likenesses in the work of the two men. For one thing, both employed mostly a certain class of people in their comedies: the high society group, educated, witty and sophisticated, with plenty of money and no children (unless grown-up) to hinder them in their movements. But perhaps one of the greatest reasons why the two always have been classed together, or compared, is that both at one time had four plays running simultaneously in London.

There are other causes for their great similarity. Though the world seemingly did not care what became of the author of *Lady Windemere's Fan,* it at least had had a taste of wit, sparkling repartee, and glorious comedy not served to it in the theatre in centuries. It was only natural that, once tasted, the commodity was found good, and there grew an insatiable desire for more. So it was that, anyone who gave it what it wanted, enjoyed the public's favor, and the place in the theatre recently vacated by Wilde. The world wanted someone to tickle its funnybone, to exalt its sense of the comical, and the world was ready to bow at that person's feet, even as it had previously bowed to Wilde. Maugham must have realized this. Coupled with his determination to succeed in writing for the stage was the realization that comedy was the best commodity with which to achieve the ambition. It was true enough, and natural enough, that for comedies of the type on which Maugham decided to base his reputation, there would have to be much in his work that closely resembled, even as late as 1907, the work of Oscar Wilde — who in the 19th century was held up as the supreme genius of the English comic stage. Wilde had very thoroughly inducted London audiences into expecting sparkling wit — at least in comedies — and for a long time the result was that, to succeed, comedies had to contain smart epigrams and wit just as sparkling, provocative, and paradoxical as Wilde's. And Maugham's plays did contain bits that were as good as, if not better than, those in Wilde's:

"Only a very thoroughly good woman could so calmly announce her intention of using the crookedest ways to gain her ends."

"My dear, one must dress."

"One can dress simply."

"But I do. That's why it costs so much."

"Everyone knows you're a horrible cynic, so there can't be a word of truth in what you say."

"My dear, do you never say anything against anyone? It must make conversation very difficult."

"My dear fellow, the degree of a nation's civilization is marked by its disregard for the necessities of existence. You Americans have gone so far as to waste money, but we English have gone farther; we waste what is infinitely more precious, more transitory, more irreparable — we waste time."

"The French are a more civilized nation than we are, and they've come to the conclusion long ago that marriage is an affair of convenience rather than of sentiment. Think of the people you know who've married for love. After five years do they care for one another any more than the people who've married for money?"

"They have their recollections."

"Nonsense! As if anyone remembered an emotion when he no longer felt it."

"If you must deceive me, don't let me ever find out."

"I won't; I promise I won't."

"She's a great friend of mine. She bores me a little."

"Some of these American women are strangely sexless."

"I have an idea that some are even virtuous."

"It takes all sorts to make a world."

Clearly, in the matter of epigram and paradox, Maugham equalled Wilde.

However, there are also great dissimilarities between the two men. Maugham built his work and his reputation as a dramatist on a more solid foundation than simple likeness to Wilde. He must have realized that, if he were to remain before the world's consciousness, and retain its approbation, his work would have to contain more solidity than was possessed by the work of the man whose place he was taking, or

rather, whose example he was following. While it is true that Wilde was also regarded as a dramatic craftsman in his day, the dramatists of this age know that he used too profusely the *clichés* and dramatic tricks of his day, all of which have dated his work and made it as outmoded as the bustle. Maugham, possessing consummate craftsmanship and ingenuity of his own, side-stepped the limitations to which Wilde fell victim, and in so doing also side-stepped the possibility of his plays becoming dead when a fashion in thought or habit had changed dramatic limitation and mode. In this way he showed himself a far better and greater dramatist than Wilde.

Maugham, as a dramatist, was one of the most interesting of modern artists, and his craftsmanship in dramaturgy was the outstanding part of his art. His plays are a very fountain-head of dramatic construction for the student and playwright.

All his comedies are premised upon a theatrical device which had been almost forgotten in the theatre. Instead of using the method of Ibsen, Strindberg, Sardou, or Hauptmann (all of whom based their works on ideas) or fashioning his plays along the same lines as Shaw, Barrie, or Galsworthy — his contemporaries — Maugham resurrected the dramatic trick of situation. All his comedies are built and rest upon this point; his plays do not begin upon the stage before us — they have really begun long before, and we are allowed to "sit in" on them only after they have progressed to a certain point of development. Thus, in *The Circle,* we see a repetition in family history, with the development of the second occurrance merely an echo of the first, while all the time the consequences of the first are visibly presented to us like a doom. This could never have been accomplished on the stage without innumerable scenes and great periods of time between scenes if the author had begun with the logical beginning of the family history. Maugham began his play in the middle of the history, and with apposition showed the result to both generations which are concerned in the story. Maugham told the story straightforwardly, without unnecessary scenic changes or superfluous verbiage. It is an example of his economy of means. Even the plays that do not possess strong characterization or dialogue, have the

saving grace of "catchy" and sometimes even stupendous situations — and thereby are capable of carrying themselves on that merit.

Coupled with his plan of catering to the feminine leads, Maugham took a step early in his career which undoubtedly helped him achieve his ambition, and which also greatly influenced his work:

During his early playwriting days it was well known, though it was also deplored, that many of the arts were kept alive only through the agency of dilettantes, amateurs, and women. This was especially true of the stage, and for a while the theatre became, because of this, not so much the place to find life as wish-fulfilment. The theatre degenerated into a dream-escape from a reality which most women abhor. While it was true that women concerned themselves mostly with acting, nevertheless the weight of their influence, in the matter of what they wanted and would pay to see (the box-office is the pulse of the theatre) was put upon the stage in no small degree. When he started to write drama, Maugham must have realized that no dramatist, were he to succeed, should overlook this weight, however much he might dislike it. So, he has given us in his plays women that charm and enchant, but women, nevertheless, that have ulterior motives. Realizing the importance of wish-fulfilment, and the weight of women in this regard, he developed women in his dramas that are epitomes of what most women, in their heart of hearts, wish they were or could become. He pictured Lady Frederick, the wanton of good virtue; he drew the lovable shrewd Norah in *The Land of Promise;* he portrayed the designing female impossible to hate in *Mrs. Dot* — all of which led up to his masterpiece of reality and wish-fulfilment in *Our Betters.* There a woman could make her choice between the truly wanton Lady Pearl Grayston or the sweet young thing, Bessie. And Maugham showed all these women in such positions that many women, even today, wish they were or could be: rich, amusing, in high society, running away from husbands with lovers, or flouting the social conventions in some manner: in any event, the cynosure of all eyes, the exponents of ideas; mistresses of themselves always, controlling situations; sometimes destiny's children of fortune,

but never misfortune, despots of all relations. Is it any wonder that all the leading actresses of the day beseiged him for a play!

Another reason for Maugham's unusual success was his knowledge of his time. Either his good judgment or his instinct told him what audiences wanted. Some of his comedies are based on this alone. For *The Explorer,* one of his four plays which ran concurrently, Maugham took his thesis straight from the war in Somaliland, then the topic of conversation, and, since everyone was interested in the war, of course they went to see the play. *The Explorer* may be attributed to a journalistic rather than to a truly dramatic sense, but the work was a commercial success, and made money for the author. Even so, the play was artistically a failure, since it was dead as soon as the interest in the subject-matter died. It served one purpose, nevertheless: brought him to the attention of the public.

Maugham's success was chiefly due to his consummate craftsmanship. This, coupled with a sense of time, or timeliness, almost assured his success from the start. And it has been his craftsmanship (in many cases more than story values or plots) which has kept his plays alive — in an age when the theatre has suffered a radical metamorphosis. Maugham's knowledge of what constitutes good drama, and what motivates human beings, joined with his masterly technique, makes his work live for us now and always will.

One quality of this technique must be mentioned, as typical of him in all his work: economy of matter. Nothing is superfluous yet his work contains no irrelevancies. All his speeches are pointed, all uses of actions have double meanings — to the appointed end. Perhaps more than anything makes his plays lasting. In this respect Maugham possessed a supreme stage sense: he knew what he wanted to say, said it pointedly, and yet dragged in nothing irrelevant to the plot. He never preached, nor was he boring. If he wanted to point a moral, he did so well and artistically, but always followed his own precept of comedy — not to represent life, but to comment upon it amusingly. This, in part, explains his bitter cynicism.

With the play *The Circle,* Maugham reached his zenith as a master of comedy. Written after twenty years of ex-

perience, when more than half of his drama-writing days were over, Maugham had already had such successes as *Lady Frederick, Jack Straw, Mrs. Dot, The Explorer* (these four being the plays that ran simultaneously in London for a year), *Penelope, The Unattainable, Smith, Caesar's Wife, Home and Beauty,* and *Our Betters,* as well as ten others which were produced but not as well received. Although all were not comedies, it was comedy which made Maugham his reputation and fortune.

In *The Circle* he combined a dramatic idea with an extremely funny situation into a masterpiece. As one of Maugham's best plays, and one of the best plays ever written it ranks with Sheridan's *School For Scandal* and *The Rivals,* and with Congreve's *The Way Of The World* and *The Double Dealer.* As with those other two geniuses, Maugham's play dated his theatre. Of his era Wilde alone accomplished this. And, even as Congreve and Sheridan are Restoration dramatists of high comedy, Maugham too may be termed a Restoration dramatist — in that he restored twentieth century drama to its highest plane.

Our Betters is the only other play which approaches in size and quality the merits of *The Circle.* It was written in 1915, but never produced until 1923. Of the two plays it would be impossible to say which is the better, since they are at extremes in their exposition. *Our Betters* may be classed not so much as a play as a gallery of portraits, but they are never-forgotten portraits. The play was truly satirical and there was no mercy in it. But Maugham, with unusual astuteness in a dramatist, did not satirize solely for the sake of satirizing: he exposed a class of society with an acrid pen. Comedy-of-manners and satire though it be, and though the dialogue bristles with sharp retort and rarely resorts to such vagueness as veiled innuendo, the play is singularly true of certain parts of London.

Thus in the class of drama with which Maugham began his career, he rose to heighths attained by few men before him, and by none since. He surpassed Oscar Wilde, and equalled the two giants of two centuries before. He attained such distinction in the theatre that today in satire, comedy, characterization, and technique he is recognized as supreme. In his lifetime he has had the pleasure of realizing that a

number of his works have been recognized as milestones of the drama. He made a fortune, and he had fame. Could any dramatist ask for more?

Among the theatre's great it is only natural that a dramatist, even if he has achieved fame and fortune in one field, should try his hand at different types of drama. And, whether he be successful or not, it is of importance to the world. If nothing else, it allows the world to judge the man's mind, and the attitude from which he contemplates the facets of human nature. It proves, too, that the man's intellectuality allows for growth and brings into true light his philosophy and psychology.

Maugham never confined himself to one type of work. His works, though many are similar in type, are never boring to see or read. They run the gamut for light comedy to serio-comedy, and to stark tragedy. Despite Maugham's unusual success in comedy, he can not be "tagged" (much as the critics have tried to do so.) He is essentially not a one-type author. His genius is too broad; his philosophy and his psychology are too restless to restrict him to a tag. If perhaps he failed in some of his aims, it was not for want of trying.

Because he made more than a name in a certain form of drama, it would be flagrantly untrue to say that Maugham wrote only comedy. His serious plays may not have been as successful as his comedies, but whether this is due to his audiences, only time will tell. It is axiomatic that audiences make or mar a play, and dictate the kind of work an author shall do. Maugham may have built a receptive audience for his comedy, yet in the later phase of his career, he entirely reverses his earlier kind of work.

In his first plays Maugham did not attempt work beyond his ability, nor use unfamiliar material. Some of his early plays are built on stories and plots that are "old stuff" in the theatre, nor did he present any new "ideas." He was satisfied with the sufficiency of his matter to get across to the audiences. Maugham may not have had the usual social-sense, which the world has come to expect of all dramatists, but however one regards this sense or lack of it, at least in the case of Maugham his work in drama is *drama*. One cannot

take into consideration his beliefs and ethics regarding social problems, the rightful realm of which is perhaps less in the field of drama than in that of non-fiction. Despite his lack of social-sense, or rather because of it, Maugham was an even greater dramatist than one who depends on his subject-matter. He did not depend for success on the possibility of audiences liking his work because it happened to strike their fancy by the type of social manners he presented. This lack of a trait common to many dramatists, allowed Maugham to go far beyond other playwrights. Maugham more than adequately made up for this deficiency by a merit not possessed by any of his contemporaries. He impressed upon his work more of his own personality than could have been possible had he written purely social drama. It is perhaps because of this lack of a social sense that his personality so dominates his work. As a result, his plays gained rather than lost; for it is a quality which demands of the writer more artistry, more craftsmanship, and more real dramatic qualities. This work is interesting for its own sake, not for the sake of the material. But Maugham took the harder road, and is remembered for the value of his work not merely for its temporary appeal. He realized that no play, and certainly no playwright, ever survived the society portrayed in a problem work; that a play written for a temporary audience is a temporary play. This he stated in one of his prefaces: "When a play's message has been corrected by an act of Parliament, it is as dead as yesterday's newspaper."

However, it would be untrue to say that there was nothing of social content in many of Maugham's dramas. He touched, here and there, on the social questions of the day. His very first play, *A Man of Honour,* showed the social inequalities of the English caste system, through the medium of a mesalliance. In *Loaves and Fishes* he pointed a satiric finger at the hypocritical clergy. In *Smith* he contrasted the character of the idle rich with that of the progressive working class. *The Tenth Man* was an expose of the British monied class, and in *The Landed Gentry* he depicted the country squires and their ladies, while in *The Land of Promise* he did the same thing for the pseudo-gentry: the ladies' maids, etc. These plays did not appear consecutively, but in a scattered sequence from his first work, which ap-

peared in 1902, until he struck his stride as a writer of high comedy, in 1923.

The way in which Maugham interspersed his problem-works among his lighter plays further proves that he was a dramatist without the usual social-sense. Maugham's sense in this phase of his work was quite unusual.

In his comedies Maugham did no more than evolve unusual situations, work them up, and depend on his imagination (and his mastery of stagecraft) to give him works of unusual qualities. Although true of his earlier plays, he did not always continue thus. Maugham is a writer of quickly vacillating moods, and some of his best work is the direct result of such moods. Yet his growth is obvious. He dropped his plan of plays of comedy for the sake of comedy only, and moved on to a different kind of play. While comedy, with his sprightly flair for epigram and paradox yet remained his forte, Maugham nevertheless worked on with more serious ideas and situations.

Among his later works are three plays whose basic principles are comedy, but which nevertheless have social content. These are *East Of Suez, The Constant Wife,* and *The Breadwinner.* While these three plays are generally accepted as comedies, they contain ideas or problems which differentiate them from Maugham's usual comedies-of-manners. Yet they cannot, in any true sense, be called problem or social plays, for the problem or social feeling presented in them is of too slight a nature. As in his comedies and farces, he relied on situations to carry the burden of the plays' frames. The situations in these three plays created by a single idea or problem, perhaps tenuous in itself, are given breadth and scope by the characters. Though these three plays have not been as successful as his comedies, they showed a growth away from the influence of Wilde, they indicated that he had become interested in dramas with serious ideas carrying a message to the audiences. These three works, then, may be termed Maugham's transition plays, between his comedies of manners as such, and his definitely serious drama.

In his play *The Unknown,* Maugham portrayed a current social theme — that humans, believing in God, or that there

could be a God for humans, could still indulge in the slaughter of the last war without being fools and religious hypocrites. This play, of all his work aroused the most controversy. It appeared in 1920, when war feelings were still high. In this work too, Maugham for once discarded his dramatic theories and entered the fight as boldly as does Shaw in his work. In the main character one can see the author, and he lashes all vicious religious hypocrisies that obscure truth. It is a telling play, with strong social implications.

The Unknown is the only play in which Maugham allowed his feelings to overcome his sense of the dramatic. The work was termed heretical, and the author was accused of "plagiarizing from life." Though, judged in comparison with his other work, it was not a good play, it showed that Maugham could be grim when he was aroused by a subject.

In spite of this change of his angle he didn't falter theatrically or dramatically, and his plays still contained the same artistry, craftsmanship, and technique as before. It was perhaps a sign of his growth. He had outgrown the adolescent fever of exaggerated humor, and his last plays became more and more grim. He had individualistic ideas of social values that he felt could only be portrayed in drama, and he did not hesitate to use that medium. His last three plays — *The Sacred Flame, For Services Rendered,* and *Sheppy* — out-Ibsenized Ibsen. The audiences expecting only comedy were shocked; and the success of Maugham's later work can only be termed *succes d'estime.* They did not run long. Perhaps it was the strong handling, perhaps it was the plays' messages (audiences dislike to see reality too close even today) or it may have been that his audiences had not kept pace with his mental growth. With *For Services Rendered,* the next to his last play, the critics raised the question of whether Maugham was slipping. *For Services Rendered* did not run long, nor did *Sheppy,* the last play. *Sheppy,* in fact, was never produced in the United States.

In his later work, following a pattern seemingly motivated solely according to the way he felt and thought, and independent of an art-form which draws audiences simply because it is that kind of form (comedy), Maugham evolved plays with a definite message, and handled them with the brutality of Ibsen. This method was new to him in drama;

he had rarely before been extremely serious in his plays — and even when he was, he had handled his subject-matter lightly. However, being brutally frank was not alien to him; he had already exemplified it perfectly in his fiction and non-fiction. But now, even in his dramas, he began handling his subjects without gloves, and the result was almost too stark for popular acceptance; or for popular success. Where his cynicism had amused, it now shocked.

Even his early critics accused Maugham of cynicism, but it is more than a convenient tag with which to label him. For what the critics considered cynicism was the truth as Maugham saw it. His work may have been bitter; never even in his comedies was it saccharine. This quality he did not consciously seek, as a lesser writer might have done; probably he was merely being natural. When not pinned down to any definite formula, with a time-limit before him, he was always bitterly truthful, as is evident in his novels, his short stories, his sketches, and his travel books. All these show the same inclination toward cynicism as do his plays. For this reason it may be said that Maugham never compromised in his art, but kept faith with his artistic conscience. He followed it so faithfully that even some of his comedies, especially his best ones such as *Our Betters* and *The Circle,* contained this inherent merit. It may seem odd that this cynicism should be called a merit, but it may be so considered if for no other reason than that, regardless of what others said or thought, or of consequences, Maugham, as an artist, never compromised in his use of what he considered important. Of course, he was already successful, and rich, so could afford to be independent of critical judgment; even so, this following of artistic truth as he saw it, and conscientious faithfulness to himself if to no one else must be considered a merit rather than a failing.

However, this intellectual integrity on the stage, unless disguised as comedy is bound to fail — as Maugham's experience proves. He was unsuccessful in using it for theatrical purposes except in comedies. The reasons for this are many, not the least of which is that the world is still young as regards the arts, and many audiences in their adolescence demand nothing more of the theatre than that it "take them out of themselves," to live in a fairy-world of

makebelieve all sweetness and little if any reality. But Maugham disregarded this, and that he did so showed him to be far ahead of his generation, even of his era — which, as far as writing drama was concerned, ended in 1933. His adherence to his artistic credo brought him failure as well as success in the commercial theatre.

Since 1933 Maugham has called himself an ex-dramatist. He had grown impatient with the conventions and limitations of drama. He had seen other great dramatists (Pinero, Synge, Jones, and Shaw) outwrite their usefulness, and because they did not yield to the new generation, become embittered in old age. This probably influenced him to give up playwriting while still at his best.

Undoubtedly the lack of success his later plays met was part of the reason Maugham decided to stop writing drama. He also felt he had said all he wanted to say in that medium, and preferred the less rigid forms of the novel and the short story. It was only natural that an author who had been as successful as Maugham should feel some disappointment that his later works were not so widely accepted, and feel that his drama-writing days were over when he could no longer hold an audience. His resolution not to write more plays was a matter of common sense not of pique. Rather than fail in the theatre, where he was already a legend, it was better to stop, since his appeal was gone. He had achieved the standing of a classical dramatist: his best plays were produced as revivals, his works were studied in the class-rooms, his dialogues and stories were pointed out as interesting examples of construction or for the moral they pointed or the period they portrayed. There were also new theatre techniques. To keep abreast of the stage requires something of the pioneer, and Maugham, after serving the theatre for thirty years, and after having tasted completely of its manna and dregs, naturally felt that it needed a younger spirit. New men were cropping up, slowly pushing out their elders. Though with Maugham's consummate skill, craftsmanship, and knowledge of the theatre, and with his artistry, he could surely have produced several more plays of worth given the proper material and plots, nevertheless he heeded the handwriting on the wall. Wisely or not, Maugham stopped writing plays in 1933, and his theatrical passing must be re-

gretted by dramatists, producers, and audiences alike, for with his passing his era ends.

Significant as Maugham is in the twentieth century drama, he founded no school. Yet it would be a mistake to say that he had no influence, for he was the fore-runner of, and paved the way for, Frederick Lonsdale and Noel Coward. His plays have enriched the literature of the theatre, and his usage of sharp handling of reality, characterization, and truth, and an intellectual credo from which he never deviated, was so good that other playwrights have followed his methods. Maugham believed that to write a good play it was necessary to possess the dramatic instinct — that without it even a thorough knowledge of technique was useless. He believed that the principal appeal of drama was through the emotions and not the intellect; the basis of a play had to be emotional. However, he was no experimenter, no pioneer; he had come into the theatre after Pinero, Jones, Wilde, and Shaw. He always accepted the traditional dramatic forms and conventions, and shaped his plays to fit their demands. But, unlike the dramatists before him, he was not content to use symbolism or expressionism when the reality could be used. His was not a surface realism; it was true realism used with expressive candor and effectiveness. If his plays do not seem to be plays of ideas or of intellectual content, beneath the surface they are precisely that. His individualism consists of being less radical than his predecessors or his contemporaries.

In all, Maugham wrote thirty plays which have been produced. This includes *Rain,* of which he wrote the story, although not the dramatization. An astonishing fact is that fully one-third of his plays were popular successes! These are: *Lady Frederick, Mrs. Dot, Jack Straw, Home and Beauty, Our Betters, The Circle, Rain, East Of Suez, The Constant Wife.* Maugham's is a record which even the theatrical genius of Oscar Wilde did not equal. Perhaps he has been less loudly proclaimed because Maugham detested that sort of thing, or it may be that he is still too close for us to appreciate the magnitude of his accomplishment. In short, Maugham is a dramatist whom it will be impossible, in the final reckoning of the century and age, to dismiss

lightly. Undoubtedly the judges will then certify that his work was that of a master.

Following is the complete list of Maugham's dramatic works,— with the dates of production and publication. It is Maugham's complete record as a dramatist.

A MAN OF HONOUR	Produced 1902; published 1903
MADEMOISELLE ZAMPA	Produced 1903; unpublished
SCHIFFBRUCHIG	Unproduced; published 1903
LOAVES AND FISHES	Produced Feb. 1911; published 1924
LADY FREDERICK	Produced Feb. 1908; published 1911
MRS. DOT	Produced April 1908; published 1904
JACK STRAW	Produced March 1908; published 1911
THE EXPLORER	Produced June, 1908; published 1912
PENELOPE	Produced Jan. 1909; published 1912
THE NOBLE SPANIARD	Produced March, 1909; unpublished
SMITH	Produced Sept. 1909; published 1913
THE TENTH MAN	Produced Feb. 1910; published 1913
LANDED GENTRY	Produced Oct. 1910; published 1913
LE BOURGEOIS GENTILHOMME	Produced May 1913; unpublished
THE LAND OF PROMISE	Produced Feb. 1914; published 1913
THE UNATTAINABLE	Produced 1916; published 1923
LOVE IN A COTTAGE	Produced Jan. 1918; unpublished
CAESAR'S WIFE	Produced March 1919; published 1922
HOME AND BEAUTY	Produced Aug. 1919; published 1923
THE CIRCLE	Produced Aug. 1920; published 1920
THE UNKNOWN	Produced March 1921; published 1921
EAST OF SUEZ	Produced Sept. 1922; published 1922
OUR BETTERS	Produced 1923; published 1923
RAIN	Produced Jan. 1924, published 1924
THE CAMEL'S BACK	Produced Jan. 1924; unpublished
THE LETTER	Produced Feb. 1927; published 1927
THE CONSTANT WIFE	Produced April 1927; published 1927
THE SACRED FLAME	Produced Feb. 1929; published 1927
THE BREADWINNER	Produced Sept. 1930; published 1930
FOR SERVICES RENDERED	Produced Nov. 1932; published 1932
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Collected Editions:

Vol. 1...(LADY FREDERICK; MRS. DOT; JACK STRAW)
Vol. 2....(PENELOPE; SMITH; THE LAND OF PROMISE)
Vol. 3....(OUR BETTERS; THE UNATTAINABLE; HOME AND BEAUTY)
Vol. 4....(THE CIRCLE; THE CONSTANT WIFE; THE BREADWINNER)
Vol. 5....(CAESAR'S WIFE; EAST OF SUEZ; THE SACRED FLAME)
Vol. 6....(THE UNKNOWN; FOR SERVICES RENDERED; SHEPPY)

Six Comedies: (THE CIRCLE, OUR BETTERS, HOME AND BEAUTY, THE UNATTAINABLE, THE CONSTANT WIFE, THE BREADWINNER)

SONNETS ON SEPARATION

By Helen J. Goede

I.

Since you have gone all days become the same,
Drawn out to long thin lines of lasting grief;
For hours that danced as lightly as a leaf
Are heavy-footed now, staggering with blame.
I call and wait and call again your name,
Though empty echos mock a strong belief.
Each night some new prayer shapes, uncertain brief,
Still no joy leaps in quickened scarlet flame.
With shadowy mists must all my life be spent,
Not know reality of living dreams?
The need of you was potence to my speech;
An ultimate perfection which was sent
To grant my mind solution of all schemes.
Only your presence can endow and teach.

II.

Only your presence can endow and teach
The wisdom of a bleak, untutored hour,
When grief has captured with intrusive power
My heart. I feel when gropingly I reach,
Your comfort scattered on a widened beach,
That smashing death-waves beat — a royal dower
Of colored-pebble days. I shall not cower
In fear before the storm wind's wildest screech.
So carefully I choose the smooth bright stones,
Each tinted shell within my curio case
I store, for you have gone and lonely days
With weighty fingers press my heart. The moans
Of coming years I hear in dreaded pace.
To comfort me, this gathered treasure stays.

III.

To comfort me, this gathered treasure stays:
The frothy lace of apple bloom, the sweep
Of startled tanager at dusk, and deep
Dark coolness found in moss-draped, pine-touched ways.
So with the hastening night that quickly grays
The flaming sky and draws down blessed sleep,
To shut out all my restless dreams, I keep
Close-bosomed on my pillow, valued days.
These amulets shall breathe their whispering spell,
And if Procrustean my bed shall be,
Then soft as rain of fallen petals lie,
Such charms within my consciousness shall dwell,
Reflecting vanished joys, when I shall see
Again, delights beneath an arching sky.

IV.

Again, delights beneath an arching sky,
With tumult's fiercely pounding pulse in earth
I feel, and answering know the precious worth
Of living. Under dead, dried leaves the shy,
Blue violet and threefold trillium try
The friendly light. With silver-bugled mirth
The spring is ushered in and with its birth
Against a turquoise dome, gay bright birds fly.

But is there spring for me who live with gloom?
Who hear a ghostly foot that treads the stair?
Or feel lost fingertips that press my hand?
The rain-dipped scent of lilacs haunts my room;
Of robin vespers, I am still aware.
This thought awakens, "I can understand."

V.

This thought awakens, "I can understand
The flight of flame-sprayed meteors hurled through space;
The force that crushes will beneath a mace
Of mystic power; the justly right command
That life be sired or death's stern-lipped demand
Be met." So earth-bound, fettered, held in brace
Of faith that motivates a mindful race,

I bare my soul to meet the burning brand
Of loss, for when the searing pain is gone,
The imprint left there, marks my claiming fold.
I sense a law of patience in dry seeds,
And life that rises from a murky spawn.
In them that lifting, shake off cumbrous mould,
I find my bibliography of needs.

VI.

I find my bibliography of needs
And study to prepare my untaught life;
To trample enmity and bitter strife,
That press around me, jagged stifling weeds.
Enriching soil on which my knowledge feeds
I seek, then soon my fragrant garden rife
With color shall forget the pruning knife
Or that it needed watchful care of creeds.
Grief's monody in life I still shall hear,
Tapping my panes with its dull steady drone,
For growth depends on it; but I shall tame
Rebellious spirit and the ghastly fear
Of parting. For this thought I must atone,
"Since you have gone all days become the same."

DREAMS

By Helen Barton Claytor

Softly the petals fall from the rose;
Silently like snow flakes they fall.
They drop on the table, then to the floor.
Presently I sweep them out of the door.

The petals are like faded dreams,
Delicate buds, then lovely flowers;
They bow to life's needs, then are no more.
Presently we sweep them out of the door.

THE POET WHO DWELLS IN "THE VALLEY NIS"

By LORENA M. GARY

Edgar Allan Poe dwelt in "The Valley of Unrest" during his lifetime, and were it possible for man to devise some magic optic by which he could penetrate the unseen future habitation of those who have passed on to some new state, it would seem that Poe's poetic soul would be discerned wandering still in the valley of unrest. During his rather short life (1809-1849), there was in his every moment an unsatisfied and everlasting desire for fame. This restless longing, which kept him moving onward, was the greatest driving force in his life; it kept him working when hopes of success seemed futile; at times it saved him from despondency and utter ruin. His experience is almost pathetic when we contemplate the great gifts which nature had showered upon him. His remarkable creative genius, his power to see and love beauty, his keen sense of rhythm, his supreme mastery of words — all these native endowments could not win for him the fame he so ardently desired. That this fame came too late for him to realize it, is indeed ironical.

C. W. Kent says in an Introduction to Poe's poems:

> Flowers do not grow without soil, and even orchids require a locality and fitting condition.

Thus it is obvious that if Poe wished to realize the greatest ambition of his life he must have all that makes up the soil and fitting condition. Had he possessed this foundation he would have realized the dream expressed in "Tamerlane," a poem written early in his career:

> I was ambitious — have you known
> Its fiery passion? Ye have not —
> A cottage. I've mark'd a throne
> Of half the world, as all my own,
> And murmur'd at such lowly lot.

"Half the world." What did Poe mean by that sweeping statement? He meant Fame. Fame that would extend from one end of America to another, from England and France to Italy and Egypt. Is it not ironical that, with all his genius, he should be denied that which he sought from

earliest youth until his last days? By what diabolical agency was that desire for which he strove endlessly and tirelessly withheld from him? There seems to be but one answer to the question, and that answer is suggested by Hamilton Mabie's "Introduction to Poe's Tales" in which he says:

> If literature is to have a rootage deep enough to bear fruit which does not perish, it must bear some intimate vital relations to the life of which it is the most searching and adequate expression; but it must also bear the touch of perfection in form which is the final evidence that the emotion, conviction or experience of the hour has taken on universal significance.

If we consider Poe's work in the light of the most universal definition of literature — the lasting expression in words of the meaning of human life — this quotation from Hamilton Mabie gives us an answer to the question concerning Poe's failure to achieve fame. To interpret the meaning of human life there must be a rootage deep enough to bear fruit that does not perish. This Poe's work does not have. It has no depth. It lacks the seriousness of purpose which can be acquired only by spiritual insight, a power to see that which lies beyond! Hamilton Mabie is not alone in his belief that Poe lacks something vital. As we read Poe's poetry, with its beautiful imagery, its colorful appeal to the emotions, we miss the spiritual element which would make the poetry have a deeper and more subtle meaning than it now has. It is like the high notes of a coloratura soprano, which please and entertain us and even cause us to marvel at supreme excellence and talent, but which have no meaning, no lifting power to move the soul to a higher level.

Barrett Wendell expressed this opinion of Poe's poetry in slightly different terms:

> In the tales and poems alike he is most characteristic when dealing with mystery, and though to a certain point these mysteries, most horrible, are genuinely mysteries, they reveal no trace of spiritual insight. They indicate a sense that human perception of the extremities which lie beyond it.

It seems to me that Barrett Wendell has found the term which exactly characterizes the element lacking in Poe's work. Spiritual insight added to all the qualities which Poe possessed would have assured him a place among the measures of literature, a place of highest rank.

Although the short stories best illustrate this lack of spiritual insight, the poems also afford evidence of this lack.

One has but to read, "to weigh, and consider" a few, to detect the shallowness and the lack of any serious purpose or depth of meaning. In "The Raven," the poem which is considered Poe's best, as far as mood and structure are concerned, there is no attempt to portray anything except melancholy — "a mournful and never-ending remembrance," as Poe calls it in "The Philosophy of Composition." Poe creates a mood in very vivid and suggestive words and rhythm, but does mood alone justify a poem of one hundred and eight lines? Mood is entertaining, but it seems transitory and unstable when it is the only aim of a poet in writing a narrative poem. How different is the reaction of the reader's mind to Tennyson's "In Memoriam." Tennyson possessed spiritual insight, Poe did not!

Perhaps "Annabel Lee" comes nearer than any of Poe's other poems to revealing a serious discernment of the significance of human life, yet the readers of Poe cannot help feeling the superficiality in lines such as these:

> And neither the angels in heaven above,
> Nor the demons down under the sea,
> Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
> Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.

The poem is full of sensuous imagery, the moonbeams, the stars, the night-tide, the sea, are beautifully portrayed, but when the music of the rhythm has died away and the harmony no longer flows through the senses, one is left with nothing to think of. If we compare this poem with "Evelyn Hope" what a difference is felt! "Annabel Lee," but what is there beyond momentary enjoyment? Nothing. When the intense moment has passed, we are left in mid-air, for these poems have no spiritual depth.

The prose poem "Eleonora" should be mentioned here in justice to Poe, for in this poem it seems quite obvious that he had in mind the death of his wife. As we read it we marvel at the beauty of description, the vividness of the mood, but again we feel, how can this be sincere?

The following is typical of his sentiment:

> Yet the promises of Eleonora were not forgotten (after the poet, Poe, had fallen in love and taken to his heart Ermengarde) for I heard sounds of the swinging of censers of the angels (words which Poe delighted to use for effect); and streams of holy perfume floated from the valley; and at lone hours when my

heart beat heavily, the winds that bathed my brow came unto me laden with soft sighs; and indistinct murmurs filled often the night air, and once, but once only, I was awakened from slumber — like the slumber of death — by the pressing of spiritual lips upon my own.

At the end of the passage Eleanora says:

Sleep in peace! For the spirit of Love reigneth and ruleth, and, in taking to the passionate heart her who is Ermengarde, thou art absolved, for reasons which shall be made known to thee in Heaven, of thy vows to Eleonora.

This is beautiful imagery and fine sentiment, and would move us if only we could forget that there had been innumerable Ermengardes at the time when Eleonora was the poet's beloved wife.

In none of Poe's poems can I find any expression which is addressed to the soul or the spirit. There is always the worshipful adoration of beauty, but it is of physical beauty. There seems to be no deeper emotion than that experienced by the senses. Truly Poe immortalized and idolized beauty of feature and form, perfection of coloring, but nowhere do we find evidence of the beauty with hidden meaning such as Ruskin describes as "the deep, the calm, the perpetual, that which must be sought e'er it is found and loved e'er it is understood," a beauty that grows and endures because it comes from within.

Poe's greatest appeal in his short stories is to the spectacular. It seems that in nearly all of them there is an address through "lamp-black and lightning," and no attempt is made to penetrate the mystery of human life. In his stories Poe arouses the horror, the gruesomeness, and the terror of some supernatural phenomena. Death comes; the story is ended. In "The Masque of the Red Death," "The Fall of the House of Usher," "Berenice," we have violent, unearthly, impossible proceedings. Death ends all! Nothing goes beyond. After horror has conquered, there is no evidence of spiritual meaning which goes deeper than the surface, there is no attempt to interpret the meaning of human life.

When Sherman Cody says that "Poe alone among English and American creative writers directed his art toward making his readers think," he seems to have misused the word think. Had he used the word concentrate, the statement might have meaning. As it is, it seems utterly fallacious. Such stories as "The Gold Bug," "Ligeia," "The Murders

in the Rue Morgue," do show some intricate contriving on the part of the author to make his readers believe that they are thinking, but in reality they are watching the creator put together cut-up parts of a plan, a procedure not different from putting together the pieces of a jig-saw puzzle. Take, for example, "The Gold Bug"; is it plausible that a little gold-colored bug having two black spots on his back would lead a learned man, a collector of entomological specimens, into any such mental excursions as Poe delineates in the story? Utterly absurd!

Some critics have tried to read into Poe's *Tales* an allegorical significance, but I fail to find any such hidden meaning. They move the reader, they horrify, they make him shudder, but farther than this they do not go. They show no depth of insight into life.

Poe was a master craftsman, he had melody and rhythm, he had originality, he possessed supreme ability to create mood — he had all these qualities, yet he failed to see what Edwin Arlington Robinson calls the

> . . . things of life
> Divinely shadowed on the walls of thought

He had many talents yet lacked one thing — spiritual insight. He spent his days restlessly searching along the surface of life; sensuous beauty and physical allurement never gave the poet what he longed for. By his natural endowments he was doomed to dwell eternally in "The Valley Nis" where nothing is motionless:

> Nothing save the airs that brood
> Over the magic solitude.

THE GREEK WAY

By Frederick Locke

Bring me not myrrh to my grave,
Leave there no crowns for my brow.
Dying, let die the last fire;
What is to signify now?
Wet not the earth with your wine;
Give it, should you wish, to the living.
Here it but waters the dust,
For the dead yield no thanks for the giving.

TWO POEMS

By Blanche Yvonne Mosler

CONFESSION

Oh, I shall laugh at love — laugh loud and long —
And like the full-blown rose at summer's leaving,
I'll flaunt my dream and sing my gayest song,
Nor let my heart, a beggared thing, sit grieving
At winter's door! Oh, I shall say farewell
To all such folly with my wildest laughter,
So those who watch me cannot run and tell,
Or call me aught but brave forever after.

But I shall weep for love — when it has gone —
Though only the night, the lonely night, will know
That Sorrow walked with dusk into gray dawn,
Because a heart in flower saw love go.
And like the rose, I'll rise to meet the day
With every bit of beauty stripped away!

LIGHT CANDLES ONCE AGAIN

The new Love's here. And time has come again
To light the candles standing still and straight;
To walk with muted tread where windowpane
Is stained with purple. Yes, the hour is late;
For tapers have been lighted often here
To other gods, too soon forgot, and old;
And I have snuffed them, standing at the bier
Of each old love reclining stiff and cold.
From frequent burning, they are not so tall;
Once, they reached high against the altar's white;
Soon they will flame but faintly — if at all;
And I shall leave the church and walk the night.

But now, my heart, forget the earlier pain;
It's time to light the candles — once again.

GASTON FIGUEIRA, POET OF AMERICA

By WILLIS KNAPP JONES

Slim, dark, with piercing eyes is Gastón Figueira, of Uruguay, now at the age of thirty-five one of South America's greatest, and certainly its most universal, poet.

He has already published a prodigious amount of poetry of the sort that, according to Concha Espina, "not only makes one feel and think, but even believe what the poet would have us believe." And what he would have us believe in and work for above all, as his recent volumes declare, are peace and human brotherhood, especially in Pan America.

Figueira started publishing early. His volume *Dulces visiones* (*Sweet visions*) which appeared in 1919 when the poet was only fourteen years old, was sufficiently mature to make the Argentine poetess, Alfonsina Storni, praise his "deep feeling and originality of theme."

In those days he was full of the melancholy, the love for solitude, the world weariness that seem to pervade all Latin youths. In his *Ballad of Life* he wrote:

Life said to me: "Come now, your dreams surrender."
To Life my dreams I tender.

Life said to me: "Give me your gaiety."
I did, immediately.

Life said to me: "And all your tears I need."
Now am I poor indeed.

Return again — I'm tired of strife —
And ask for one thing more: my life.

Such dejected outpourings filled his life till, in 1923 and 1924, thirteen volumes of his poetry appeared in the Helios Collection in Buenos Aires. It was enthusiastically welcomed. Romain Rolland called Figueira a "true poet and pure artist." His fellow countrywoman, Juana de Ibarbourou, and Gabriela Mistral found emotion combined with technical correctness in his writings, and many other critics

found an absence of pessimism and a love for Beauty as his chief theme.

Of his literary beliefs, he declared in his volume *Huyendo del Hastío* (*Fleeing Boredom*): "The true artist discovers Beauty in every aspect of life, however humble and insignificant it may appear, provided he knows how to relate it to that which is infinite."

This volume and others appeared later under the imprint of a Paris publisher. One was reprinted in Mexico.

Later, in his maturity, he began to think less about his woes, and more about his surroundings. He was scarcely beyond school age himself when he wrote a volume *Para los niños de América* (*For the children of America,* Buenos Aires, 1928), a collection of poetry and prose that achieved instant popularity. Its opening words were an appeal for a Pan American spirit, and the legends and descriptive poems were intended to give children in all three Americas a sense of pride in their birthright. One poem in Portuguese and another in English emphasized the all-American tone.

The book was enlarged and reprinted in 1937. The Panamerican Union distributed a mimeographed version in 1938. Many schools of this hemisphere use it as classroom reading material. One can understand how children enjoy reading an author who can describe a pineapple this way:

> With my green, feathered plume
> And my pock-marked face, all browned,
> I'm an Indian in ambush
> On the ground.

Now in the full swing of his Pan American urge, the ambitious poet envisioned a series of volumes of poetry, one for each nation. In 1928 he announced a twenty-volume series, *La Fiesta,* to depict the beauties of American countries, their races, histories, and achievements. By the time the first book *Rio de Janeiro, Ciudad de Hechicería* (*Bewitching City*) appeared, in 1931, he had retitled the series "Maravillosa America" but he was as determined as ever to complete it, and new volumes are constantly appearing.

In not all the poetry that Gastón Figueira writes can one tick off the syllables with regularity on his fingers, but then,

in the America which it recreates, one cannot squeeze all Nature into classic and formal pattern. His poetry does have fire and color and mood.

One sees in the series the author's sympathy and love for the Indian. This is especially true of volume two, *Quetzacoatl,* full of Mexican legends, descriptions of volcanoes, and geographical features.

Number five of the new series, and the third to deal with Brazil — this time with Baia and Recife in Northeast Brazil —is *Alba en la playa de los mil cocoteros* (*Dawn on the beach of the thousand coconut trees*) (1939) from which the following poems are translated. The same length of line and location of rhyme as in the Spanish original are used.

VOICE OF RECIFE

What bittersweet pleasure I feel when I see you,
Recife.
Your loveliness cuts to my innermost core.
Your streets, your canals, your gardens, your bridges,
Your sweetness, your grace all implore,
All entice me:
"Remain here awhile.
Where can you find any Eden more blessed
Than here? Thousands and thousands of coconut trees
Give you fruit, by the rays of the hot sun caressed.
Here the nights are pure magic.
Touched with gold are the days as they wing.
And the blue sea chants, and the birds
Miraculously sing.
In spots like this, green dreams still lurk
Of calm forgetting, far from strife
Where man may dwell and find
A quiet life!
Sapotis, pineapples, *cajús,* and *guayabas,*
Bananas, and mangos grow, all honey within . . .
And for every moment of sadness I bring you
Lovely women who show on their skin
The amber-tinted kisses of the sun. Such charms!

Such lovely women under whose dark, languid lid
Black eyes of fire are hid!
Such well-turned arms!
And for your many hours of idleness,
Hammocks have I, of colored wizardry,
Hammocks that on my gleaming beaches swing
Suspended,
Each end, from a coconut tree.
I'll show you nights more beautiful than any,
Nights when the gleaming tropic eyes
Shine, starry-bright, in midnight purple skies.
I'll show you nights more beautiful than any,
When in the greenish hair
Of every palmtree there
The new moon puts a comb, bright as a silver penny."

Ay, Recife, Recife,
Hour after hour I hear
Your voice beseeching me,
But I shall leave you soon.
Perhaps tomorrow,
All voluntarily,
I shall go smiling, City lovely in the sun,
For I know you will win my heart
Even more now that we have to part,
Since you and happiness are one.

PRAYER TO THE MOON OF THE TROPICS

O Moon, Our Mother, in the heavens thou art.
Bring us thy kingdom for our consolation.
Each night put bread of dreams into our heart,
And resignation.
Forgive defects by which we're daily cursed
As daily we forgive man's scorn; and then
Though wounded oftentimes by Beauty-thirst,
From all blaspheming free us, Moon.

Amen.

STREETS

The streets are redolent of the memories of dead centuries.
A street
In which little stones and big ones meet;
Stones polished bright by so much wear;
And other streets that show no care.
Languishing there
In one window, an anaemic plant trying to flower.
Streets gay
That recall a popular holiday:
The Eve of Christmas,
The Day of the Magi, Saint John's Eve,
The Bumba-meu boi and the Burrinha.*
Colonial mansions
With windows full of broken panes;
Houses that seem like blind old women
Hearing street noises they no longer see:
The streets are redolent of dead centuries . . .

Sometimes
A girl comes out upon a balcony
So languidly.
Sometimes
A wandering vender
Climbs up or down the sloping streets
With his donkey
And his cry:
"Yams. Brown sugar candy. Sweets!
Who'll buy?"
His loud cry
All melancholy in the dreary wastes will die.
Streets there are yet
That beg men to forget . . .
With rosaries of cobblestones, heads bowed, and full of stars,
They pray that Life will pass another way.
They hate the light of day
That shows the wounds and wrinkles they
Received from Time.

*Popular dances and fiestas of the Northeast, in the first of which stock characters, including the **boi** (ox) appear in cortège and in a dramatic dance.

Like mystics, they adore the night.
They love the white sheen of the moon
That moves
Over every stone and moss-grown bit,
Idealizing it;
It fills the broken panes with lovely old reflections
There as it climbs,
And brings back for an hour or two the illusion
Of having gone back to colonial times.

SONG

My lovely Maid of Baia,
Slender as a bamboo,
Never has any woman
Enchanted me like you.

And what a sweet enchantment, what blessing you brought to me,
O lovely Maid of the lands of the whispering coconut tree!
Your body, so voluptuous, provocative, and gay,
Is beautiful, Baian Maid, with grace like waves at play.
Your arms are soft as petals from the flower called *manacá;*
Your smile beguiles like silver from the mines of Assuruá.
In the radiant siestas with their soporific heat,
I've little need of water, since your lips so fresh and sweet
Upon my hot, parched mouth, assuage and quench my thirst with kisses.
The coolness of a sherbet from the *arazá* fruit, this is.
Your body, your voluptuous body, warm like summer air
Is a dusky flower, springing from this scented land so fair.
Your body for a moment, all too fleeting, I possess
In mad and ardent ecstasy, in glorious drunkenness.

O Maiden of Baia
With a body like bamboo,
Never has other woman
Enchanted me like you.
A thousand blessings on your land
With its palms of babaçu!

MARACATU*

New Orleans, Virginia, Cuba, and Martinique,
Jamaica, Borinquen, immense Brazil . . .
A black nostalgia lurking everywhere,
The same black stridency is everywhere,
Beside green forests, beneath the gleam of a sky that indigo
shadows fill!
Sugar plantations, fields of coffee and cotton
Where our ancestors, deprived of hope,
Shed burning tears, forgotten . . .
Come, let us dance, though tears be wet,
Oh, oh, uh, uh!
Let us forget. Let us forget!
The blues, the rumba, and the maracatú
Are kin.
The sorrows of our ancestors,
Transformed into rhythm, lurk therein.

Mornings crazy with birds. Ardent sunshine.
Early evening with timidly palpitating stars.
Peace of a colonial Sabbath.
Gambling shacks, and on the hill
An ancient chapel on its altar keeping
A negro saint who hears them weeping.
White and beautiful is the Great Lord's child.
Hard is her heart, and cruel, and wild,
Blacker than coal, black and defiled.

Come, let us dance and never stop.
Oh, oh, uh, uh!
We must forget, although we drop.
The blues, the rumba and the maracatú
To the same family belong.
The woes of all our ancestors
Converted into song.

Tropical phantoms of palms
Beating out in incessant rhythm, Pocema, Orichá,
Mandinga.†

*An Afro-Brazilian street dance.
†Gods and voodoos of the Brazilian blacks.

The black heart sings. The black heart weeps. The black
heart is vibrant.
Silhouetted against the diaphanous horizon, the crazy dance
Seems sketched in India ink.
Waters of the Mississipi, waters of the Amazon,
That secretly bear out to sea
More tears than you think . . .
The blues, the rumba, and the maracatú
One blood possess,
The sorrows of our ancestors
They transform into loveliness.
So let us dance and never cease,
Eh, eh, ah, ah,

Forgetfulness will bring us peace.

INFIDELITY?

By Doryll Winter

Here it is in an old box,
my heart,
almost squared by Time.
Come nearer, do not flee its silence.
Give me your hand. You see?
The shadow is its natural color.
You cannot hear its beat? But, dear,
don't you remember? It's yours.
The box has kept it more securely, and I
have never missed it.
When I had your first letters, I used
to take it out, and dream.
Then, I would dust it; and one day
I forgot.

Now, you won't have it
and I . . .
am better off without it.

POEMS

By Ellen Chantal Brown

IMMORTAL

You should not weep because my love for you
Has vanished into dreams that pass you by,
For love is fragile, goes from dust to dust,
But dreams can never die.

WAR YEARS

If only it were true that time comes in
On quiet feet and slowly takes away,
So that you hardly see the end begin,
Can hardly realize the last decay.

If only these could be still fearless years
That pass while dreams build into lasting things,
Hours to indulge in fantasies and tears,
To watch through March to see what April brings.

But now time comes on wild pursuing feet,
Enters each secret corner of content,
Wings madly up each lonely peaceful street,
And in a breath leaves love and laughter spent;

And we who might have known the gladness when
Two travel far along some sunlit path,
The slow sweet grief for things that die — and then
A kind of patient knowing aftermath,

Have none of these — only a tearless yearning
For things that lie beyond the wind and sky,
And all the fearful deep relentless learning
That comes of seeing hope march off to die.

WARES

Today in the streets of China the little children are selling flowers at a high cost to help finance the vast expenditures that must go into the army and munitions. Sometimes one rose is as much as fifty cents.

Buy a rose! I've a rose here
Sweet as the springtime,
Sweet as the songs that
The children sing.
Buy a rose: it will last
Till tomorrow — till tomorrow —
So buy till tomorrow
A long breath of spring.

Buy a rose! Yes, it's dear,
But they pay with heartache,
They pay with famine
And their rows of dead,
And why should you grudge
Its costly fragrance,
When their own sweet life-blood
Runs red — runs red?

Buy a rose! In a week
There'll be no more roses,
And no more children
Selling them here, —
Selling you fragrance
For a bright bit of silver, —
Selling you fragrance
That a war made dear.

IN THE TWILIGHT

In the twilight when the shadows creep across the fields of clover,
And a kind of jewelled quiet gently stills the whole world over,
And the pines begin a gossip interspersed with gentle laughter,
And a tiny star steals out and then another follows after:

When the fairy folk come stealthy from their hiding in the roses,
Dancing little fairy jigs and striking funny fairy poses,
You and I, my little elf-child, with your pixie eyes a-dancing
And your golden hair a-gleaming and your silver feet a-prancing,
You and I, my little elf-child, when the white owl 'gins his hooting
And the vagrant fairy piper starts his lilting magic fluting,
Hand in hand across the meadows we will gallavant together,
Feel our bare toes kiss the daisies, feel our bare legs brush the heather.
Sandalless we'll dance, my elf-child, nary stitch to hide our blushes
Save a scarf of cobweb satin and a girdle made of rushes,
Just the two of us, my elf-child, in and out among the clover
Till the misty shades of sunrise touch the skies the whole world over,
And the dancing and the fluting and the daisies and the laughter
Hide among the things you dream and dream forever, ever after.

REVERBERATION IN CRYSTAL

By Nelly Baxter

In this bright hour of frost
Cold numbs the flesh until
Identity is lost.

Here blood cannot impair
The cobweb of the breath
Which hangs upon the air.

Now thought rings slow and deep;
It shatters with each stroke
The crystal spell of sleep.

BERNARD SHAW AND HIS CRITICS

(1892-1938)

By WINIFRED SMITH

One of the quainter proofs of the unsoundness of absolute standards in criticism is found in the study of the ways a contemporary author has appeared to the reviewers of his work during his lifetime, for attack and praise can be more easily traced to their roots in prejudice and passion when a contemporary is discussed than where an older writer is concerned. Passing years winnow out the more foolish and less objective judgments, sometimes carrying with them the object of controversy itself, sometimes raising it to an elevated and polished splendor that looks almost eternal.

Before Bernard Shaw is safely tucked away on the shelf of near-classical playwrights to which Mr. Edmund Wilson has recently assigned him,* it is amusing to look back over some of the earlier characterizations of him and his work which have poured from the presses since he first began to force himself on the attention of the early 1890's. From then on he has been as zealously advertised by loving friends, as he has been pilloried by enemies of his political ideas and romanticists who failed to recognize in him an idealist almost as romantic as themselves.

Max Beerbohm, who wrote a series of brilliant notices of Shaw's first plays in the Saturday Review, 1900 and 1901, was apparently the earliest forerunner of Mr. Wilson in his recognition that Shaw's mind is not at all objective, for beneath his mask of "realist" he is "an idealist to the core, . . . his plays are the presentment of life as he thinks it ought to be"; moreover, Beerbohm saw in all Shaw's work only the expression of "his own quick strong brain — darting with the impetus of its own velocity," determined "to convert us to this or that view"; consequently each of his characters is only "his own recognized self." The debate between the parts of this "self" naturally gives rise to the dialectic in the plays. According to Mr. Wilson's much later and more carefully psychologized interpretation, the paradoxical element

*In **The Triple Thinkers**, 1938

in Shaw's style and the conflict in his ideas are due to the three planes on which his lively personality functions: first, "the commonsense sphere of every-day practical considerations"; second,, "the plane of socialism, of the anticipated reorganization of society in the interests of ideal values", and finally, "The poet-philosopher's . . . longer view of life *sub specie aeternitatis.*" Beerbohm's analysis in the early 1900's is, of course, more tentative than Wilson's, being based on much less data and being quite unsure as to whether or not Shaw were worth taking seriously, for his "seriousness is nullified by his frivolity" more often than not.

That Shaw was "never serious" had been still earlier and more positively stated by A. B. Walkley in his *Playhouse Impressions* (1892). The portrait painted there, with perhaps a touch of irony, is of "a universal genius, a brilliant political economist, a Fabian of the straitest sect, . . . a critic . . . *comme il-y-en a peu,*" with "a standard of taste . . . much too high" for the contemporary stage, yet withal in spite of being "never serious," "a prophet in Israel," who is beginning to be listened to. The implied meaning of the whole description is that with all these gifts, this brilliant individual somehow could not long maintain a solemn pose — and yet the prophet and "political economist" in Shaw caught the attention of his earlier readers much oftener than the artist-playwright, for they were frequently revolted by his terrible insistence on such uncomfortable facts as slums and poverty and on the need for socialist reconstruction. Mario Borsa, for instance, in his cursory account of *The English Stage Today* (1907) said: "Shaw's dramatic work is pure journalism, destined to enjoy a certain vogue and then be swallowed up in the deep pit of oblivion."

Chesterton in 1909, in the first book on Shaw, treating him as "Irishman, Puritan, Progressive, Critic, and Philosopher," and only incidentally as "Dramatist," finds his philosophy" exactly like black coffee, it awakens but it does not really inspire." His ideas are, indeed, more dangerous than this simile implies, for they "encourage anarchy of thought" because they lack "hesitation before mysteries," and because they encourage "charlatanism of speech" and a variety of egotistic poses, destructive of sustained thought. Yet Chesterton, himself something of a mystic, understood

Shaw's philosophy better than did Beerbohm or Walkley, and recognized in him a tone of underlying tragic emotion, not felt by most of the early critics, which has only come to overt and dominant expression in *Heartbreak House* and some others of the post-war plays.

Two other studies of this period, an essay by St. John Hankin on "Bernard Shaw as a Critic" (in the Fortnightly, 1907, and in Vol. III of his collected *Works*) and Holbrook Jackson's volume, 1909, featured the realist, the thinker, the destroyer of romantic conventions, even, ludicrously enough, in Mr. Jackson's opinion, the "renouncer of duty." This is the kind of approach that helped demolish the idea of Shaw's extreme frivolity, a notion definitely laid to rest by the publication of Archibald Henderson's monumental biography in 1911 (2nd edition 1932), where a thoroughly documented account is given of the years of hard economic studies, of Fabian pamphlet writing, of street speaking, that preceded and accompanied the early playwriting. Such activities seemed to many commentators to negate the possibility of such an active social scientist's producing artistic work for the theatre. Gordon Craig and other writers in The Mask have not wearied in this line of attack. "Shaw knows nothing of the art of the theatre," Louis Madrid announced dogmatically in The Mask, Vol. IV; "art has never flourished in connection with social or political reform." Moreover, he adds, Shaw, like his friend Brieux, is not "human; neither can he win humanity to do as he wants. They are without the milk of human kindness." Craig's voice, growing shriller as he baits "The Colossus" at intervals, sounds at last positively hysterical as his rage mounts against the man who has done so much more for the modern theatre than he himself. At times he enlarges on Augustin Filon's disdainful judgment: "L'enfant terrible est devenu un enfant gâté"; at times he resents Shaw's good-natured contempt for Henry Irving, expressed in the correspondence with Ellen Terry; again, admirer of Mussolini as he is, he agrees with H. Eulenberg (*Gegen Shaw: eine Streitschrift,* 1925), that Shaw is old-fashioned in his Puritanism, his democracy and his dramatic technique. Such severity is perhaps understandable, for "I don't read anything Mr. Shaw writes," confesses Craig in The Mask for January, 1926; "he writes about

drama and the theatre — This forces him to put on airs. Nothing can trip Mr. Shaw, nothing is too much for him," then, patronizingly, "he's as good as gold," he was born "to be a great priest or a very holy man," actually he is only "a very clever man, failing to be an artist."

Evidently Craig, having lived so long out of England, has no idea how theatre people there have enjoyed producing these plays that are no plays; C. E. Montague testified long ago that, "A Shaw play, rightly produced, always rides a cast of English actors as a Donoghue rides a sluggish horse; it fairly lifts their brains along; it gets every ounce out of their wits." And Forbes-Robertson, speaking at a dinner in 1927, paid this tribute: "I have been rehearsed by all the leading dramatists of the day, . . . of them all the most able and wisest was George Bernard Shaw." After all, a dramatist should be judged by those who are actually at work in his field rather than by those who have failed to make a success in it.

Time is too short for the examination of the numerous books and the still more numerous articles that have devoted attention to Shaw since Chesterton's first biography appeared. What seems mistaken in them now, at least in those written before 1916, is due to their authors' quite general assumption that Shaw's ideas were the original and important element in his work, as witnesses especially Joseph McCabe's thoughtful study (1914) of the Irish playwright's "very serious and original view of life," or Faguet's, "In my opinon this man is simply a satirist, but he is the greatest satirist since Swift."

As early as 1905, however, controversy over Shaw's originality began.* Was this new voice in the theatre echoing Ibsen or de Maupassant? or perhaps, more plausibly, Molière, as Hamon laboriously set out to prove (1916) — or does this satirist lean only on Samuel Butler, as he himself admits, or also on W. S. Gilbert and Dickens and Charles Reade, that "melodramatist of fact," as Holbrook Jackson calls him, or is he chiefly indebted to Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Bergson? — This question was, of course, insistently asked after the publication of *Man and Superman* in 1903. Or are his roots still longer, perhaps going back to Euripides,

*Daily Chronicle, 1905, cited by Collis, Shaw, 1925.

the rationalist, as Gilbert Norwood insisted in 1921? These scattered suggestions of sources and influences were gathered together and greatly added to by M. Ellehauge in his enormous volume: *The Position of Bernard Shaw in European Drama* (1931), where all the important nineteenth and early twentieth century movements in life and thought are carefully defined and related to Shaw's active mind. Marx, Wagner, Ibsen, Dumas, fils, the German naturalists and philosophers, Blake, Shelley, Darwin, Strindberg, and many others, are all ransacked to provide sources for Shaw's thought, and to prove that his "enthusiasm for contradictory theories," and his comparative inability to systematize the various points of view he reflects and illustrates, nevertheless lead him to his own peculiar vision, which is, it is grudgingly admitted, "somewhat individual."

Because this individuality of point of view had expressed itself so vigorously and unconventionally from the beginning of its formulation, commentators on Shaw's technique, or lack of it, have not been wanting. The earliest of them, again A. B. Walkley, a devotee of the French well-made play, in his reviews of *Candida, Man and Superman* and other comedies produced at the Court Theatre, 1906 to 1907, (in Saturday Review and Drama and Life) scolds Shaw constantly for his "wilful, perverse disregard of construction," in fact calls him "no dramatist at all"! At this time much of what passed as aesthetic criticism was either, as with Walkley, mere comment on Shaw's "dialectical brilliance," or comparison of his work with the average theatre piece of the period, or thinly disguised ranting against ideas which it was thought should never be lugged into drama. Nearly everyone acknowledged his "high spirits and gay love of paradox" (e. g. J. Freeman, *The Moderns,* 1916) while a few began to study what were the significant formal results of the high spirits. Hamon, for example, in *The Twentieth Century* Molière, listed, quite superficially, such stylistic qualities as inversions, surprises, "physical farcical tricks," and contrast between "lack of action in plot" and "intense intellectual action," in Shaw's plays. Galsworthy, as late as 1918 (in *Another Sheaf*) states that these plays "have no form," and yet adds, appreciatively, "what form could so perfectly express Mr. Shaw's glorious crusade against

stupidity, his wonderfully sincere and lifelong mood of sticking pins into a pig," as just the style he has chosen!

Galsworthy's generous attitude was a kind of defense of Shaw's ideas needed after the war, because his war pamphlets, 1914 to 1919, had made him many enemies who expressed themselves with violence in letters to newspapers and weeklies during those years. Mr. Wilson has well analyzed the ambiguities in Shaw's war time writings, though a sympathetic reading of *Heartbreak House,* such as Mr. Collis has given it (1925) makes plainer than any cooler criticism can do, the sufferings and confusion the war brought to its author. This play, which Mr. William Lyon Phelps (1921) found so "dull and incomprehensible" read without its preface, Mr. Collis regards as a masterpiece; certainly its strange, dizzy movement, its phantasmagoric atmosphere, its lyrical intensity, express the prophet's despair over the lost generation more perfectly than any other imaginative work of the time.

This play is not the creation of a man whom E. A. Boyd in 1918 (in *Appreciations and Depreciations*) accused of being "frankly and medievally intolerant," "cut off from all sympathy with the whole tendency of modern life," without "fixity or coherence in his first principles." (One is moved to ask whether modern philosophers recognize "fixity" as a "first principle.") Nor is this play the invention of a man whom J. M. Gillis in 1923 classed with the *False Prophets,* as a misanthrope, a satirist with "a penchant for perversity" which has led him to "a philosophy of unmitigated pessimism"; nor is it the work of one whom Henry Arthur Jones, disgusted by Shaw's lack of patriotism, called an "unthinker," a menace to ordered social thought and social life." (English Review, 1923-24.)

Ashley Dukes countered with an essay pointing out in detail why Mr. Shaw should be regarded as "the sincerest and the most consistent of the moderns," for his "moral passion spells indignation against an immoral world" and shines with brilliance "through the mistless air" of the plays. In later years, however, Mr. Dukes has been inclined to join the group of theatrical producers and entertainers who feel "good old Shaw's" influence is a danger to modern dramatic forms, which Mr. Dukes and his school believe ought to develop under the influence of the ballet and the film. Yet these younger workers should not forget that,

"We moderns are the products of Bernard Shaw," as Hesketh Pearson stated at the beginning of his book on *Modern Men and Mummers,* (1921) illustrating his thesis by the essays which follow. A more elaborate defense of Shaw's contribution to the twentieth century theatre was made by A. E. Morgan in his *Tendencies of Modern English Drama* (1924); pointing out the value of this iconoclast in freshening old forms and creating new ones; Mr. Morgan lists Shaw's good deeds, such as the abolition of the old type of heroine, — Eunice Fuller Barnard later added that he did more, he created the flapper, — the abolition of the old type of love scene, the destruction of the sentimental ideal of home life and of the romantic soldier-hero and of the glorification of militarism, of the comic stage Irishman, of the serious revenge and honor themes, and of the technique of the well made play, — the very thing Walkley chided Shaw for not using. Most important of all, Morgan insists, is Shaw's "inimitable power of searching to the very roots of things for the causes of decay and disintegration"; and, in summary, this drama in which fantasy and reality are fused is "literature," almost the only dramatic literature in its period.

This note of praise has not sounded so often in the 1930's as in the later 1920's. Shaw's praise of the Soviet Union, after he was fêted there on his 75th birthday, made him even more enemies in England than had his war writings. (cf. H. W. L. Dana in American Mercury, 1932). The political reactionaries began to attack him openly for his "Bolshevism," and the group associated with the Criterion covered their distate for his ideas by pointing out the "failure" of his dramatic work. Among the latter, A. D. Hawkins (*Criterion,* 1934) in a particularly ill-tempered article accuses Shaw of "bastardizing" Ibsen. as "a sanction for his own emotional barbarism," and of manipulating "the drama as a vehicle for the sentimentalities of radical thought," with the result that he "aborted the drama . . . outside that social perspective, nothing remains of his plays except the shoddiness of their texture, the sterility of the characterization and the intermittent rumors of a wit *manqué.*"

Lest our heads grow dizzy in the attempt to find reasons for a judgment that extinguishes its subject so completely,

perhaps it would be well to turn to D. Mirski's better based appreciation, the rather that it is part of a highly satiric analysis of *The Intelligentsia of Great Britain* (1935), among whom doubtless Mr. Hawkins considers himself a bright light: "Shaw stands practically alone in the generation of the older progressive intelligentsia," says Mirski, in still working for world revolution, this "in spite of his vitalistic world view," which can only seem to a modern Russian a survival of superstition. Mirski's rigorous analysis of Shaw's wit as rooted in the contradictions of his philosophy, forecasts Wilson's similar criticism, published a little later, but he gives Shaw more credit as a constructive social force, especially in comparing him with H. G. Wells and J. M. Keynes, two "naive" incipient fascists, who shudder at contact with the "great unwashed hordes of the proletariat."

Gradually, from all the contradictory hate — or adoration — inspired studies of Bernard Shaw as prophet and as artist, the main lines of a just appreciation of his work are beginning to emerge, and Mr. Wilson has apparently given the clearest summary of them to date. There are still many of his admirers, however, to whom he is, as he was to his old friend, William Archer, "the most brilliant, admirable, lovable, tantalizing, and exasperating character" in the world.

PARTING

By Jeanne Storm

While, like a slow, steep-climbing lark, the moon
soared into the evening sky, you stayed with me;
and we two lovers, as in ages past
all lovers did, outwatched his flight until
the hour came for you to go . . . O God,
the subtle heartbreak in a hat and coat!

POEMS

By Virginia Spicer Thompson

WALLED CITIES

Like walled cities — our hearts!
A barrier, erected strong and wide,
About each one; that neither be allowed
To see inside!

Walls of pretense — builded carefully —
To keep, each from the other, sight or sound
Or things that we hold private; but to wish,
Secretly, that they were known!

For, as I think you love me (only think —
Lacking the power to scale your heart's high wall),
Even so do I hold the truth from you —
And know not why — at all!

TRAGEDY

Malki is dead! Surely it can't be so —
Why, only yesterday he licked my hands,
Demanding I go with him to "foreign lands"
To seek the little folk we love and know
In field and wood. But I said: "No,
Some other time; I'm busy now — our plans
Will have to wait"; but still his gay demands
Rang in my ears, at work — and I *did* want to go.

Now it's too late — it seems he went alone,
And on his way our *neighbor* shot him; he
Was walking o'er that brute man's property —
So he came dragging back, to die — at home!
Ah, splendid soul — the heart that laid you low
May never hope for peace such as you know!

PREMONITION

I do not know, of course, but still I think
That some day you will come again, to lie
Beneath the silver stars and selfsame trees

Where I sit now; they sigh
For your return —I think.
Or was that I?

The night is soft with flower-laden dusk,
The early summer blossoms in its prime;
Was it a thousand years ago 'twas thus?
Or just a day? O Time —
You cannot take the memory, at least,
For that is mine!

I think you'll come again; I don't believe
A memory, as sweet as this, could fail
To guide your wayward steps to a return
To love's old rendezvous. Take you the trail
Again, some day, when you have longed for peace —
To no avail.

A THOUGHT

By Dorothy Coleman

I have something very beautiful, most precious, very frail, almost intangible,
That I hide away in the darkness,
Because I have learned that most humans are bitter and cruel.
Often, when I am alone . . .
I take it out of hiding and dust it.
Each time I feel that it has grown dingier and smaller and I become alarmed!
Being a coward, I dare not use it publicly, fearing sneers and laughter.
And, because I do not give it light and love and action, it is slowly dying.
God give me courage . . .
For *what* shall I do when it is read . . . my soul?

ERNEST LACY: FORGOTTEN IMMORTAL

By ABRAHAM FELDMAN

World criticism, from Aristotle down (and upward), is uniquely concordant in the faith that the crown of esthetic creation, the art of arts, is dramatic poetry. The charm of the theatre as the dynamic synthesis of architecture, the plastic and graphic skills, dance, music, and literature, this manufactured magic contributed to the belief, but never gave it birth. We need not search far to learn its origin: the fountainhead of all art is in the primeval mimicry of motion, especially emotion, disciplined in rhythm. Since Æschylus the intellectual wealth of nations may be esteemed according to the magnitude and intensity of their verse playwrights. Shakespeare exalted England above every country in the supreme courts of culture; Ibsen made little Norway a world power; William Butler Yeats did more than O'Connell and Parnell to emancipate Ireland's brains from British fetters.

If the United States should liberate the works of Ernest Lacy of Philadelphia from oblivion, they would accomplish more for the delight and enlightenment of the earth than all the candlepower of the Italian statue (France's gift!) coldly gracing New York harbor.

Dramatic poetry is the most magnificent of arts. Therefore Ernest Lacy is our most magnificent artist. Christian Gauss of Princeton solemnly proclaimed of his master-tragedy: "I consider *The Bard of Mary Redcliffe* the greatest poetic drama our country has produced," and ranked the dramatist "in the very forefront of American literature." Before his untimely death Lacy was laureled by men of justice as "the modern Shakespeare," says the *National Cyclopedia of American Biography.* His plays called forth from metropolitan audiences the rarest of responses, silence like that which raptured the crowd that listened to Lincoln at Gettysburg. Each edition of his scriptures printed before America waded into the World War was purchased entirely. Yet thirty years after *The Bard of Mary Redcliffe* was published there exist hundreds of volumes about play-carpenters like Clyde Fitch, meretricious melodramaturgists like David

Belasco, and weathercocks like Maxwell Anderson, for every single word written of Ernest Lacy. How did his country (even his home city) come to forget so utterly this native titan? I hope to provide here a fragment of the answer. Others will follow and prove that not in vain did our genius "sit in hell and dip his pen in blood." He predicted his inevitable vindication:

What matter if no living soul be stirred
By aught these artful cells of verse contain? —
The rhythmic clanking of a minstrel's chain,
The outcast years that huddle in each word.
The breathing present will be sepulchred,
And from these tower walls deviced with pain,
A voice, unheeded through a jealous reign,
In Time's impartial session shall be heard.

Milton once declared that artists should endeavor to make works of art from their very lives. Lacy reached as close to realization of this ideal as any of humanity's mighty dreamers. Long before the Republic granted him citizen's franchise he was mature in body and spirit. Not yet twenty-one, he triumphantly passed the ordeal of the Pennsylvania bar. Together with his wonderful brother William, who was just a year older, he set the type in his father's garret for William's amazing polemic against Herbert Spencer's doctrine of the "Unknowable." Already the tragedy of *Rinaldo the Doctor of Florence* was composed, a work revealing everywhere mastery of technique and incredible understanding of human passions and heart secrets. When Joseph Haworth produced it in 1895 the author was acclaimed "the modern Shakespeare"! Yes, blemishes spot the scenes, but they are the faults of the bard of bards, exuberance of images and prolixity of abstractions. As a whole *Rinaldo* challenges comparison with *Romeo and Juliet,* and far outshines Stephen Phillips' more famous *Paolo and Francesca.* Lacy handles blank verse with greater fertility than Phillips. And *Rinaldo* is never sentimental; it provokes terror and pity, not piquant pathos. Finally, Lacy's jets of humor serve not merely for comic relief but fortify the world's spiritual grandeur with matter-of-fact, social substance.

Even a casual reader of this youth's drama will be struck by the fact that Promethean travail delivered the tragedy: its medieval history is exact and extensive, it displays juridic cunning, classical erudition, and a veteran's ingenuity in stagecraft. Where did the boy learn this wealth, you wonder? He was prepared for destiny in the Presbyterian home of Barnet Lacy, a prosperous lawyer from Warren, Pennsylvania, where Ernest was born on September 19 in the year of fire and despair 1863. His parents were of French and English colonial ancestry, proudly puritan, ardently devoted to their sons. William and Ernest were given the finest training the Lacys could afford after they settled in Philadelphia in 1870. Even when their father's ventures in finance closed disastrously they kept private tutors who upheld the stern but lofty standards of their first school, Hastings West Philadelphia Academy. The elder Lacy brooded so bitterly over his family's ruined fortunes that he was ordered south to save his health. But he never stood erect again, sick to death, broken with remorse and shame for causing his children to earn their bread by their own sweat.

Both Lacy lads were equipped with old-fashioned Calvinist consciences, and worked like fanatics to restore their father's pride. William was established as attorney, and Ernest, surrendering a whimsical ambition to become an actor, tutored candidates for the bar. They toiled in unison from dawn to dusk and frequently to dawn again; young Will never lost a case. Together they issued a revision of Kent's *Commentaries* in four huge volumes (1891-92), published under Will's name to celebrate the prodigious philosopher who demolished Spencer's *First Principles* in 1883.

In 1885 the poet married Harriet Dugan of Brotherly-love, Pennsylvania, on June 18, the day when the Liberty Bell was redeemed from New Orleans and enshrined in the old State House of Independence Square. On the eve of the wedding Bartholdi's colossal image of Liberty arrived in American waters. But Lacy could not be urged to lyrics by these events while he was struggling for livelihood and the honor of the house of Lacy. Also his conscience decreed that he should surpass *Rinaldo,* climb to the poetic peaks that heroic Americans like William Moody, Richard Hovey, George Cabot Lodge, were hoping to scale.

To enable Ernest to round his art with cosmopolitan points of view the family sent him to Europe, gathering the necessary money with characteristic self-denial. In the British Museum, in the libraries and galleries of the Continent, he worked to perfect his powers; demonic is the *mot juste* for the way he worked, accumulating innumerable notebooks, mastering the trends and devices of world drama as reflected in the poem-plays of Oscar Wilde, John Davidson, Edmond Rostand, Maurice Maeterlinck. The world was reveling in a new renaissance (the glorious Nineties!) and our bard's life raced along uplifted by terrible joy, for he felt his whole body in harmony with

the prophetic soul
Of the wide world dreaming on things to come.

Then, not without warning, the heart of the house of Lacy was broken, with one smite. Ernest received a cablegram telling that his brother Will was deathly sick: come home! Memories of that ocean voyage of 1891 remained with the dramatist to the tomb:

Could I unutterable thoughts give speech —
The passion, the unspeakable unrest
That ofttimes surge within my throbbing breast,
And 'twixt my heart and action wash a breach,
What rage, what struggles would the telling teach!
O for the power to word my feelings blest! —
The great salt sea of pity — all that's best
Within my nature swelling o'er its beach.

And, in calmer mood, confiding to his God of vengeance and clemency, he sang:

Father, I pray to thee for strength, not light;
Life's earthly path appears illumed to me,
Though birth and death are dark with mystery.
Thou know'st how often through the memoried night
Tears streaked with blood dim my bereavéd sight
For one that is no more — how sad to be
Like mateless bird above the moaning sea,
With wounded wing, in slowly drooping flight.

"William M. Lacy died, according to Dr. James E. Garretson, from a fever brought on by overwork, and is buried I know not where." He reached Philadelphia too late to kiss the marvelous youth goodbye, too late for the funeral, and he never saw the grave. Inconsolable he explored to relieve his surcharged nerves the workaday world of the theatre. His friend William Gross introduced him to the luminaries of mummerdom, Joseph Haworth and Julia Marlowe. He won the post of play-revisor and press agent for the Walnut Street Theatre and the Park Theatre; he actually became business manager for the latter house. With fierce zest he performed his daily drudgeries, and rarely laughed. He helped to produce the Paris Winter Circus and countless comedies. No, conscience never made a coward of a Lacy. He wrote three comedies himself, hilarious plays of Irish "country matters," *The Ragged Earl, Crom-a-Boo, The Blackthorn Sceptre.* Andrew Mack staged the first in 1891 with surprising success; a movie was made of it. But the other pieces never had a chance to outdazzle the footlights.

Lacy read his *Rinaldo* to the enchanted Marlowe, but alas, she could not produce it because the heroine died before the final act. She was charmed by a dream he had of a drama concerning Thomas Chatterton, the creator of some of England's imperishable poetry before he was nineteen and a suicide. The first fruit of this dream was the tragedy in a single act named *Chatterton* which Julia Marlowe presented in Chicago, 1894, herself in the title role. This little play is flawless, mingling prose and verse in a fabric of romance and history without parallel. Adolphus Ward of Cambridge, England, a renowned authority on Shakespeareana, praised the play warmly: "finely conceived and at once takes possession of the imagination." The critic of the Philadelphia Daily News witnessed clearly Chatterton's unique qualities: the drama "indicates that he (Lacy) possesses a much greater knowledge of stagecraft and a much higher degree of constructive skill than usually falls to the lot of our English-speaking playwrights; and he brings to the treatment of this subject, cast though it be in classic model, a scrupulously careful indication of motive throughout the action, and a fidelity to truth, in all details, which stamp him as belonging to the most distinctively modern school of dramatic art."

The triumph of *Chatterton* emboldened Haworth to stage *Rinaldo* the next year. This was the judgment of the crabbed critic of the Boston *Transcript*: "There are many lines in *Rinaldo* of deep and subtle meaning; many apt and striking similes; many expressions and lines of thought that are original as well as noteworthy. We do not remember any play by a modern author that reaches so perfect a literary distinction, mingled with such manifest development of the ancient English dramatic models. It is marvelous, being so good a piece of literary work, that *Rinaldo* will even stand the test of a stage production, so inimical to all forms of literary quality in the drama are the forces that govern the contemporary stage." Those were the heydays of Dion Boucicault, William Gillette, Harrigan and Hart and Hoyt, Bronson Howard, James Herne . . .

The last of the Elizabethans was rescued from the menace of hunger by the Central High School in 1893. The school then had collegiate standing and boasted such teachers as Albert Smyth, editor of Franklin's works and champion for the serious study of American literature, and John Duncan Spaeth, later of Princeton. Lacy was invited to instruct in elocution and literature. He shouldered his tasks with such zeal, made the school so famous for eloquence (particularly as pioneer in scholastic debates) and dramatic training, that he succeeded Smyth as head of the English department in 1907. He earned his wages at the expense of his art, Spaeth confesses in the *Dictionary of American Biography,* laboring in awe-inspiring fashion despite the plague of pedantry and politics that infected his environment. He carried "his sensitiveness with a challenging air," says Spaeth. A satiric sonnet To an Ape reveals what "vermin" the poet contended against as a state stipendiary:

I, too, have learned distrust,
Yet on a pleasure-bounty must depend;
Into iron cages we have both been thrust,
Where we can climb and chatter till the end;
We shall be one, proud ape, when we are dust.

He would never have been elected poet-laureate. Not being one

Of these chameleons, which change their hue
To match the color of that on which they feed,

he disdained to conceal his unorthodox convictions. He could sing of a harlot: "Poor soul! not lust but hunger in her eyes." His hero *Rinaldo* was accused of preaching as

An equalizer whose own rank doth fix
The level of his communistic sea —

His hatred of "handsome falsehoods" made folks of flexible morals uneasy. The city of Quay, Penrose, and Theodore Dreiser's 'Titan' Cowperwood, and their idolaters, had no higher honor for the twentieth century Shakespeare than the degree of Litt. D. conferred by the Board of Education in 1903. No playhouse welcomed *The Bard of Mary Redcliffe,* printed at his own cost in 1910, after Edward Sothern spurned it. Sherman & Co. took payment for publication of his *Plays and Sonnets* (1909), which were damned with faint praise by William Winter and other criticasters of eminence. No wonder Lacy stormed in solitude:—

Would that I could on warlike field contend
With lance and sword for native right to think,
And conquering live, or meet a knightly end;
But I am locked in dungeon, where the clink
Of grinding chains and noisome things offend,
And when I thirst they give me gall to drink.

So he proclaimed himself A Rebel. "I shall breathe rebellious to the last!" But he found no certain and clean weapons to battle the archfiend Oppression with, could only cry alone:

O for the strength of some Norse god to slay
This great frost giant, and in streams of blood
Drown his accurséd race! from his foul clay
Sweet Liberty would fashion land and flood —

Yet being no utopian he did not linger in dreams of true democracy, where Chattertons and Lacys could work serene-

ly, the acknowledged legislators of the world, in Shelleyan phrase, platonic presidents of a universal republic of brotherly-love.

Lacy's supreme drama was dedicated to the memory of William his lost comrade, "the marvelous boy, the sleepless soul who perished in his prime." (Thus Wordsworth on Chatterton, whose esthetic and ethical influence on him and Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, and Frenchmen like Alfred de Vigny, is unquestionable and incalculable.) The play is not only the conclusive review of Chatterton's meteoric life. We are shown a cross-section of Great Britain shortly before the American Revolution, the age of Sam Johnson, Bishop Berkeley, Horace Walpole, and "Ossian" Macpherson. We are presented with the deepest probe into the anatomy and what might be called the political economy of genius. *The Bard* is not closet tragedy. Structurally designed for this century's most advanced theatre, it compels the student to build in fancy a commodious stage and anthropoid puppets, setting them in symphonic action for the five entrancing, exhilarating acts. No narcotic, — but nourishment!

The enthusiast critic of the New York *Times* announced: "Although we have other writers who have made for poetry a distinguished place on the American stage, for positive achievement in dramatic poetry that glows with its own inner fire, that has assurance and strength and splendor, we believe Lacy's name will head the list." But poetry was bustled off the American stage by what Professor Spaeth designates "realism." Only librarians heard Lacy's Atlantic City lecture of 1912 on The Reconciliation of the Ideal and the Real. Average America glutted theatrical appetites with Augustus Thomas, Charles Klein (the Broadway Brieux), George Cohan, puny Pineros and clowns styling themselves comedians, or, seeking the sublime, with Percy MacKaye . . .

Lacy dramatized Captain Frederick Marryatt's *Japhet in Search of a Father* and submitted it to Richard Mansfield, but the thespian preferred to squander his talents on ultra-Victorians like Bernard Shaw. When Julia Marlowe pronounced farewell to the stage on May 27, 1916, she did it with the perennial favorite of lovers of "historical romance," *If I Were King*. On June 17, the eve of his wedding anniversary, when America was already convulsing toward the

delirium of drums and bombs that disoriented her art into perpetual "transition," Ernest Lacy died. He left unfinished a tragedy, *Earl George* (founded on a text from Blackstone), for which pictures were painted to clarify his progress; and a tragedy, *Montezuma* (based on Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico*), which would have portrayed the rape of Virgin America by early European imperialism. But his heart was white from bleeding for dead comrades, for wretched-fruited academic drudgery, for Columbia deaf and dumb to her noblest poet. "Crushed hearts ferment and make the wine of song!" he exulted in *Rinaldo,* but the wine turned to wormwood.

> We find the age of heroism past,
> And drunken Avarice puking on the throne.

For the not impossible monument of the Unknown Minstrel he had written:

> You crowd the places where we wept alone;
> Hallow the few and trivial things we touched;
> Erect us sepulchres at princely cost,
> One tithe of which would have delayed their use
> And filled our being with the joy of life!

It is not too late, despite the deluge of world war slowly surrounding us, to execute justice for Ernest Lacy, and thus deliver a blow against barbarism that may start our second rebirth of freedom, the final revival of learning, the last renascence.

WINTER NIGHT

Slow-winged the night and steadily it fell,
Slumbered without a dream upon the hill.
The leaves, and there were many, slept that night
Frozen and still.

From where I stood the hill-road rose to swell
Starward, and over it the winter chill
Re-diamonded the skies. Earth lay, while snow sank light,
Frozen and still.

FOG-BOUND

By Marion Sinclair Walker

All day I had tended the fire
In the gray, lone house on the headland.
A day of fog, wind, and rain.
Behind us the dripping spruces
Pressed closely, crowding us to the edge
Where against the rocks below pounded
The gray, cold, unfriendly sea.

All day I had tended the fire.
Now at nightfall I crouched on the hearth,
Striving to fan into flame burnt ends and dull embers.
And I suddenly saw there my life —
The many-hued flame that had danced in the dawn
Quenched. Burnt ends and dull embers
Remained — darkness settling and fog closing in.
All day I had tended the fire.
To what end tend it longer?
Why stoop striving to fan into flame burnt ends and dull embers
On a hearth doomed to blackness and cold burnt-out ashes?

But then, quite unbidden,
They leaped into flame, my burnt ends and dull embers —
A goodly blaze, lighting up the rafters,
The friendly books and chairs.
And from the new-lighted windows
Where it had been crouching, the fog slipped away backward
To the arms of the dripping spruces.

The blaze could not be lasting —
How could it, when fed by burnt ends and dull embers?
Still — I wondered.

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